

## QU'EST CE QU'IL DIT?



*Photograph by F. H. Jullie*

EDOUARD HERRIOT

ARISTIDE BRIAND

PAUL BONCOUR

LOUIS LOUCHEUR

The French Delegation listening to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald pleading for the admission of Germany to the League at the Fifth Assembly, September, 1924. (See p. 129).

# COLLECTIVE INSECURITY

by

H. M. SWANWICK

C.H., M.A.

(One-time Editor of *Foreign Affairs*, London)



15850  
D.22.



JONATHAN CAPE  
THIRTY BEDFORD SQUARE  
LONDON

FIRST PUBLISHED 1937

JONATHAN CAPE LTD. 30 BEDFORD SQUARE, LONDON  
AND 91 WELLINGTON STREET WEST, TORONTO

341.12  
S10A

15850

G.26.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN IN THE CITY OF OXFORD  
AT THE ALDEN PRESS  
PAPER MADE BY JOHN DICKINSON & CO. LTD.  
BOUND BY A. W. BAIN & CO. LTD.

# CONTENTS

PREFACE	7
INTRODUCTION: SENTIMENTALITY AND CYNICISM	13

## PART ONE

### THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

I	THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE	41
II	THE LETTER OF THE LAW	69
III	THE LAW AND THE OUTLAW	93
IV	THE HOUSE OF CARDS	119
V	THE WANING OF CONFIDENCE	161
VI	THE CRASH OF SECURITY	171

## PART TWO

### THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

I	OFFENCE AND DEFENCE	195
II	STOPPING WAR	239
III	MAKING PEACE	259





## P R E F A C E

THIS book had to be written and, since no better has written it, I have felt compelled to do so.

It is a hopeful book.

During the last few years so many illusions have been exploded that, if we can only learn from these rude lessons and not return to our illusions we may hope. Opportunity can always be made by the brave and honest.

There is far too much talk about war. Let us get on with making peace.

Too much importance has been given to alarmist talk about Germany; this has played into Herr Hitler's hands, helping his rearmament by making him the focus of attack.

Here is no defence of Naziism; ill treatment has had the ill consequences which a few foresaw. But, by the achievement of something approaching a relative strength in proportion to other great Powers, Herr Hitler has cut short tedious and futile discussions as to the meaning of 'equality in principle'. The time has come to negotiate.

Should anyone complain that I seem to find fault most with my own country, there are two good reasons for this: that, loving one's own country best,

## P R E F A C E

one has a very high standard for her; also it is only the policy of one's own country that one can hope to influence even in the slightest degree.

It is essential not to allow the drive for the resuscitation and strengthening of sanctions to remain unopposed by political arguments. These are the arguments that are never fairly met by sanctionists, who sweep their audiences away on a flight of 'IFS'.

I read recently in a review of a book by a distinguished writer that, 'with a feminine disregard of dates', she had omitted them. I have avoided at least that alleged pitfall of femininity. I admit that a page peppered with dates is not a beautiful sight; but, in the kind of argument I have tried to formulate, the order of events is of the first importance. Whether an act was a cause or an effect may alter our judgment not only of its moral and political significance, but also of the state of mind which prompted it. And acts, as we too often omit to notice, are the results of states of mind; and the states of men's minds are, at least partially, induced by the treatment those men have received.

Events move so rapidly that it may be well to state that the civil war in Spain was started by a military rebellion against a Left government and references to 'the Government' mean the government of 1936.

## P R E F A C E

I am aware of the objections to personifying countries, and I refrain from this misleading practice. It is only to avoid wordiness that, in speaking of governments I call them 'France', for short, 'Germany', for short, etc.

A sanction is a penalty for a crime. According to the Covenant of the League a state which resorts to war in disregard of its covenants commits a crime. The sanctions decreed in the Covenant are the penalties (which may entail a League war) for that crime.

It is difficult to find one appropriate name for the men who direct the political destinies of the world. Few have earned the name of statesmen; the term politician carries an innuendo, which should be avoided, unless there is deliberate intention; I have, when the intention is neutral, fallen back on the noncommittal term, 'ruler'.

To save repetition, 'the League', when used without qualification, means the League of Nations; 'the War' means the World War, 1914-1918; 'States Members' means States Members of the League of Nations.

The longer notes are to be found under their corresponding numbers at the end of the chapter to which they refer.

H. M. S.



To  
*the loved and honoured memory of*  
**FRIDTJOF NANSEN**  
*and to*  
**C. G.**  
*whom he rescued*

In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

JEREMIAH XXXI, 29, 30



# INTRODUCTION

## SENTIMENTALITY AND CYNICISM

No one should be surprised at the failure of sanctions — A revolutionary institution can be worked only by revolutionaries — Sovereign states cannot be trusted to apply sanctions — The League must be considered against its background — Psychological aspects of the use of force — Motives for breaches of law — A League war as destructive as any other — Theory and practice in politics — The Peace Ballot — Foreign Offices and Geneva — Lack of security the result of lack of confidence, not lack of force — Pact of Paris — Disarmament Conference — Economic Conference — Sentimentality an aspect of cynicism — To be safe it is necessary to be trusted — To be trusted it is necessary to be trustworthy — The future must retrieve the past

*The tragic manner in which the Governments drew back from using the League to its fullest extent in the Abyssinian dispute, has left behind a feeling of despair as to the power of the League which is in no way justified. The belief in collective security, then so rudely shaken, can and must be re-established. If it is once made clear, before a crisis, that an attack on any law-abiding member of the League will for certain be repelled by the united strength of the rest, it is as certain as any system of defence can make it that no attack will be launched. Without some such assurance the fear of war will always be present, and while*



## INTRODUCTION

*that fear persists it will be difficult to induce any nation to make any concession — however reasonable — which might weaken its own power of defence. Such a policy of joint defence to prevent aggression will make it easier for the nations to reach an agreement to limit and reduce their national armaments. That, in its turn, will make the system of collective security more reliable and effective.*

— Extract from a manifesto issued by the  
League of Nations Union

December, 1936

THIS book is intended to urge above all else that we ought not to be surprised, given the character and constitution and conduct of the States Members of the League of Nations during its first seventeen years, at its failure to apply sanctions to law-breakers; still less have we any right to feel disenchanted with the League. Enchantments are dreams for children and no grown person should indulge in the luxury of fairy-tales about real life; fairy-tales in which he gets what he wants without effort, merely by wishing. The League has failed badly because its Members have failed badly. It is a machine and it can be used for good or for ill by its Members, or it can simply be left unused; in which case it will rot and rust, and the rot will infect its Members, as rotten wood infects the sound.

If a machine breaks down, the only sensible course

## INTRODUCTION

is to inquire the cause of the breakdown. We must not, like savages, beat the machine. We must ask: was it adapted to the work it was expected to do? Were the workmen trained and disciplined to work it? In the case of a new, even revolutionary institution like the League, can we think that the men who undertook to co-operate in it were themselves revolutionary enough to make it a success? Peace has been promised 'to men of goodwill'; was the goodwill always there? Obviously the goodwill postulated was not a mere matter of perorations at Geneva, but of active beneficence and scrupulous fairness to everyone equally. Was it prudent, when constructing an organization, 'to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security' (as the Preamble to the Covenant says), to arm that organization with coercive and destructive force, before it had been armed with goodwill?

As much harm can be done by expecting too much as by expecting too little. By provision of sanctions extending to the actual waging of a League war, it is here argued that the too much was not even too much good. Heroically altruistic as might be the motives of a state crusading for righteousness against its own supposed immediate interests, states of that sort exist only in fairyland. But the objection goes farther than that. The attempt to impose on a

## INTRODUCTION

number of sovereign states combined to keep the peace an obligation to make war (in the form of sanctions) is not only doomed to failure, but would be even more disastrous in its results if it succeeded.

Sinister motives are easily attributed to the people who have made a great experiment which has, at least in part, failed sensationally. Mere denunciation is not helpful. The state of the world at the end of the War was one which should make one lenient to those who had to grapple with it. The method pursued here is to touch upon a few of the complexities which the Secret Treaties, concluded among the Allies during the War, and a few of the conflicts of resentment, fear, ambition, prestige, nationalism, greed and sheer necessity (to say nothing of fatigue, confusion and hurry) raised among the victors at Versailles and to contrast them with the superhuman calm postulated by the Covenant. In the same way, contrasting theory with practice, there are set against a background of nationalist policies pursued outside the League by Foreign Offices, some of the discussions at Geneva for amendments to the Covenant and attainment of Security as well as League Conferences on economic co-operation and disarmament. From beginning to end the question recurs whether the nationalist policies of Members gave much hope that League action would be directed to the purposes for which

## INTRODUCTION

the League was intended. One cannot fail to be impressed by the fact that the League did good work when that work was separated from national politics; that conferences of experts resulted in useful recommendations, whereas conferences attended by national governments too frequently foundered. They saw the better; they followed the worse.

Much has been written about the place of coercive force in international law and a place for it has always been found in imaginary world-constitutions. Some of its psychological aspects are considered in this book.

Sanctionists often seem to be revolted by any consideration of states of mind. They claim that 'here is the Law and here is the appropriate penalty for infringements of the Law; prove the infringement and apply the penalty. Quite simple. Hard cases make bad law'.

That a formidable number of these scraps of paper upon which the laws were inscribed and signed have been torn up since 1918 does not influence these legalists to revise their laws, nor does the fact that much of the tearing-up has actually been done by those who first made the laws and by all the foundation Permanent Members of the Council of the League. Sometimes they have found it convenient to ignore a breach of the Covenant, but when they do take note of it they

## INTRODUCTION

regard it as foolish, many of them indeed as positively immoral, to inquire into the motives of the law-breakers, into the provocations they may have received and into the difficulty, perhaps the impossibility of bringing them to justice and of vindicating the law by appropriate retribution. They are not deterred by the fact that, in the words of Sir Norman Angell (*Time and Tide*, March 10th, 1934), 'any use of armed force, including international armed force, is bound to inflict unspeakable misery'. It is not only bound to do so but it is likely that it will lead to a first class world-war, in which scientific methods will wipe out what there is of civilization as well as the original occasion for the war. Such a result may seem regrettable to them, but they seem also to think that we are not to be deterred by such apprehensions.

A war begins for one purpose, but it is certain to continue for a score of purposes and the horrible crime commonly veiled under the name of war is in fact a summary of all crimes and a nourisher of all vices; its incidence is indiscriminate; it is the ultimate anarch; its weapons are so atrocious that its advocates dare not call them by their names and when from their pulpits they preach their crusades for million-murdering death, urging men to burn alive, to blind and mutilate, to scorch with vesicants, or slowly choke with gas, to starve children, scatter

## INTRODUCTION

homes, sterilize the very earth and propagate every kind of disease-breeding filth; to conduct human relations by destroying truth and freedom and kindness for the duration of the war; why, then they still call upon chivalry to 'draw the sword of the Lord'. A League war, however lofty its motive, would in none of these respects differ from any other modern war.

The pitiful answer which sanctionists find to this indictment of a League war is, in effect, the familiar schoolboy retort, 'The other fellow began it'. Or the breezy optimistic sanctionist may remark, as one did, 'An army directed from Geneva would, like the policeman, try not to injure innocent people, but it and he will restore order at all costs'. At all costs! An army makes a desert and calls it order. And it will *try* not to injure innocent people, although it is certain that no army has any chance at all in modern warfare against powerful antagonists, unless it throws overboard all considerations of what used to be called humanity, and unless it makes full use of that most valuable weapon of war, the lie. The enormous majority of victims would have had no responsibility for any crime their rulers might have committed.

One of these simplifying sanctionists adjured the present writer to 'cease wandering in vague psychological realms' and devote herself to the

## INTRODUCTION

consideration of scraps of paper only. Certainly the almost universal tearing up or huddling out of sight of these scraps of paper ever since the war (the League Covenant being the most striking example) is a portent worthy of close attention. We know that, in the past, treaties have often been broken or unilaterally denounced by diverse states; but the spate of such anarchic actions since 1919 (when, precisely, machinery was introduced to substitute civilized for barbarous methods of revising 'treaties that have become inapplicable') has become almost a flood and has dangerously undermined the little confidence that was left. Psychology is not necessarily vague, and it is the only study which can throw light on the motives that have caused this rage of destruction of agreements almost as soon as they have been ratified. Indignant denunciation is a pleasurable exercise and may sometimes be a comparatively harmless form of spiritual blood-letting; far more often it clouds the real issues and takes the place of intelligent search for causes. Moreover it is commonly blind to one or other side in a controversy, denying, in effect, that there can be anything to be said on the other side.

Intellectual laziness, or a failure in sensitivity may also be among the causes for avoiding the effort necessary in the search for motives. Cut-and-dried little sets of laws are easier to understand and

## INTRODUCTION

simpler to state than the strangely and irrationally mixed motives which cause men to act as queerly as they do: brutally, treacherously, vaingloriously, hypocritically, with such childish myopic greed and such panic herd-instinct as they do, and yet are not altogether vile; and yet are pathetically brave; yet do intermittently love and help each other; do now and again have glimpses that would make them less forlorn.

Nevertheless these are motives we must understand. Politics, and especially international politics, should be far more concerned with psychology and economics than, as they unfortunately have been, with legalism and a barren chop-logic. This book, therefore, is not concerned with the question whether we can draft yet another Covenant, or Treaty of Mutual Assistance, or Geneva Protocol, or Locarno treaty; nor even whether we can get rulers to reaffirm the old or sign the new. It inquires into the political, the geographic, the economic, the moral conditions of the people upon whom, in the last resort, would depend the carrying out of any of these agreements, and upon whom would fall the agonies, the famines, the pestilences and the mutilations entailed by the use of coercive force in a mechanized and highly scientific organized world. It asks why so many agreements, whether made freely or not, have been broken. In particular, it



## INTRODUCTION

tries to show the methods by which, contemporaneously with their speeches and votes at Geneva, rulers were conducting relations between their own country and foreign countries within and without the League; methods which often made nonsense of their Geneva orations.

When a British politician has expounded his foreign policy to a home audience, he has commonly alluded to the League in terms of picturesque but vague eloquence. He is loyal to the League. He becomes lyrical on the subject of Peace which, for some reason, he is apt to call indivisible, without seeming quite to realize the implication of this way of thinking, which is that war too must then be indivisible. But we have very rarely had anything more definite from him than the fervent assertions that he will go as far as other States Members, and that to say more would be to pre-judge decisions which the League, and the League only can take. In actual practice Wilson's League for 'open covenants openly arrived at' has been a useful additional buttress not only to secret but to enigmatic diplomacy.

Contrariwise, the lecturer on the League has eschewed questions of foreign policy and has shown, in his expositions of League proceedings, a detailed knowledge of the Articles of the Covenant, or the resolutions of the Assembly or Council which bear

## INTRODUCTION

upon the case under consideration; but of the rough and tumble of living politics — nothing. At lectures, as at political meetings, the audience has scarcely ever been given both the theoretical and practical information upon which to form a balanced opinion. Anyone who has made the attempt knows the difficulty of stating a case fairly without being accused of ‘dragging the League into politics’, and a speaker who has avoided this accusation may be painfully aware that an address so disinfected may have had much of its vitality as well as its party virus extirpated. Masses of people have thought of League policy and foreign policy in water-tight compartments, expecting the latter to be patriotically selfish and even domineering and bumptious, while work at Geneva was to conform to an enlightened internationalism; they have not asked themselves how the one was moulded by the other, nor considered that representatives who have to placate nationalist or imperialist cravings at home are the same men who have to speak in the international key at Geneva and cast a vote there which may ultimately, owing to domestic conditions, turn out to be an irredeemable promise.

Rulers rarely take the people into their confidence as regards foreign affairs; so long as these are conducted as a branch of power-politics, based on armaments, it would be too dangerous to do so.

## INTRODUCTION

Educative League propaganda, on the other hand, has treated of them as a professor might lecture to his class on the abstract principles of Plato's *Republic*, or an international society in *Erewhon*. Yet it is essential, if such a society is to be made workable here and now, that we should have some idea of the various stages of development in the constituent states, of their economic needs, their racial affinities, their unsatisfied ambitions, their resentments, their inherited alliances and commitments. Nor must we ignore the prodigious psychic effects of victory and defeat in any war, but especially in the most extensive war the world has ever seen; the contrast between the sentimental dream of a war to end war and the cynical realities of the Secret Treaties, by which alliances were botched up during the war with promises of loot; the history, filtering through in countless memoirs, of how the peace treaties of Versailles, of St. Germain, of Neuilly and of Sèvres were actually made.

The august and discreet official records of how these treaties were concocted must be supplemented by the descriptive writing of critical and well-informed witnesses of what even Lord Balfour called a 'rough and tumble affair', if we are to form a just idea of the degree of reverence to be expected for the keeping of a law so arrived at. For treaties are part of international law, and it is purely

## INTRODUCTION

doctrinaire to assert that laws hurriedly laid down in a period of confusion and violently imposed will have the same sanctity as laws debated in quiet between all parties concerned and willingly agreed to. For this reason the Covenant contains the wise provision of Article 19 for the peaceful review of treaties, and it is a measure of the soul-sickness created by the war that, though everyone knew that the post-war treaties were not and could not possibly be accepted for long, no Member has ever had the courage to propose revision at any time; all preferred to see large portions of them crumble, either by unilateral repudiation, or because they were not worth defending, or from sheer impracticability. And the deplorable effects of this timidity have not been modified by forcible-feeble protests and declarations of the 'inadmissibility' of the inevitable.

The fact is that peace-making, because it involves a break with age-old tradition, is a far more courageous affair than war-making; but the risks we run for peace are well worth running and the risks for war end always in tragic folly. Nothing could be more untrue than the vulgar image of PEACE as a forlorn and dishevelled woman, with an imbecile expression, clothed in unpractical and unhygienic garments and furnished with monstrous wings that are an anatomical outrage and — like sanctions —

## INTRODUCTION

could never be used. Peace must be stripped, for truth and for action.

The result of the partial methods of enlightenment generally adopted has been a considerable extension in this country of purely theoretical and greatly simplified knowledge and opinion in regard to the League, without the necessary very sobering knowledge of the difficulties and complexities in the midst of which the League has to work and of the dangers with which rulers have to reckon, but of which they dare not speak, lest they give themselves away to a potential foreign enemy or a watchful Opposition at home. The so-called Peace Ballot (1934-1935)<sup>1</sup> was largely filled up by people who regarded the whole subject from a theoretical point of view; who were, of necessity, quite irresponsible and who, even if they followed League politics more closely than the average person, had not acquired the habit of asking themselves how their theory would work under actual conditions; whether, for instance, a state which has suffered this, or committed itself to that, or which is involved in a score of domestic difficulties could be expected to act promptly and altruistically, at any given moment, perhaps against an ally or a dreaded foe, in accordance with a set of pre-arranged rules embodied in a pact. The Referendum has no place in our consti-

<sup>1</sup> See Note 1, Introduction.

## INTRODUCTION

tution and is totally inapplicable to a highly complex and technical question. The Peace Ballot was an attempt to influence the Government by an unofficial Referendum and was civilly but rightly put in its proper place by the Government. It is as cruel to expect too much of people as it is cowardly to expect too little. How many people saw or even imagined the Gorgon's head which M. Laval showed to Sir Samuel Hoare during the autumn of 1935?

The history of the last eighteen years should have taught us that to secure the signing of a pact may be the smallest part of the difficulties in international relations; the greater difficulties have arisen when the signatures have had to be honoured. Yet popular, and especially journalistic interest, which may have been all agog over the finding of what diplomats call a formula has often been so rapidly dissipated, once the formula found, that it has turned out to be merely a stepping-stone to renewed international anarchy. It took sixteen months to agree on the formula of the Kellogg Pact; breaches of the pact, almost unnoticed, began to occur on the morrow of signature. The 'Stresa Front' (fortunately) scarcely endured any longer.

It has therefore seemed useful to sketch the various proposals for the international application of coercive force simultaneously with a few examples of

## INTRODUCTION

the contemporary conduct of their foreign relations by the states making the proposals. This has never been done before and even a very slight sketch, such as this is, may perhaps suggest answers to those who are asking despairingly why the bottom seems to have fallen out of the League; why sanctions have broken in its hands; why, after a brief membership of seven years, Germany resigned; after a flagrant act of unprovoked aggression, Japan resigned; after an equally flagrant act of aggression and conquest, Italy still remains, a mischievous and disloyal Member, welcomed by the great Powers. Interesting subjects for speculation too are the motives which have induced Russia to enter the League and the United States to remain outside.

Some ask despairingly. Others, such as the League of Nations Union (an extract from whose manifesto of December 1936 stands at the head of this chapter), cry that we must at once re-establish the belief in collective security. As if it had ever been established! As if the Covenant of the League had been but recently and, as one writer puts it, 'momentarily' broken! Whereas the truth is that the Covenant was, in several important instances, actually broken long before the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, or Japanese aggression in Manchuria; that all politically important international movements, good and bad, have been outside the League;

## INTRODUCTION

that in spite of tedious protestations of loyalty at Geneva, the States Members have conspired to neglect and ignore it for most political purposes and that matters of vital importance have been discussed and settled by the old methods of suspicion, chicanery and force.

We need not acrimoniously blame the Powers for this survival of old diplomacy, which is the natural consequence of pre-League events and states of mind. What is unpardonable is to overlook it; to pretend that the first ten years or so of the League's existence were halcyon years and — refusing to face candidly the nature of the League, how originated, how composed, how controlled — to expect from it a purity of purpose and a steadfastness of will that would have been possible only as the result of a complete change of heart. Of such a change the begetters of the League showed, in their international relations, no sign. It is difficult not to think wilful the blindness which has refused to see that, though the machinery of the League is new, the machine-minders are the same as of yore and — the people will have it so.

Naturally those who have put all their hope, their faith and their labour into the League, or into any or all of the many peace-promising pacts there have been since 1918, feel, if not despair, yet grave disappointment; disenchantment even. Despair is



## INTRODUCTION

not for brave people, but it would be salutary if the disenchanted, instead of merely clamouring for the re-establishment of never-established law, would use this interval to question the moral, social and political foundations of the law; to ask upon what basis of confidence and consent it was built; whether it was ever accepted in spirit and in truth and with full knowledge by the rulers and the people who offered it lip-service; whether in fact it was capable of fulfilment. M. Clemenceau spoke of it as a reinsurance, supplementary merely to the vital insurance of alliances. Mr. Lloyd George spoke of it in its early years with open contempt; he preferred conferences to which he could invite selected Powers.

Only those are not disenchanted who never fell under the enchantment. Those who never believed that war between powerful states would be stopped by the sanctions prescribed in the Covenant do not now wish to see men waste this precious time of respite in trying to put together the broken bits. Much advantage will accrue when the litter has been swept away and people leave off concocting schemes for the punishment of war-makers and start in real earnest to make peace by mutual help, the redressing of grievances and the abandonment of childish conceptions of national honour and prestige. If great injury was done to the young League by the circumstances of its foundation (*see* Chapter 1)

## INTRODUCTION

and by the inclusion in its Covenant of Articles 10, 16 and 17 (commonly called the Sanctions Clauses) further injury has been done by the unwarrantable emphasis thrown upon these articles of late years by propagandists who, while strangely minimizing the earlier breaches of them, have insisted in more recent lectures and publications on their supreme importance for the maintenance of peace.

For seventeen years, the rulers at Geneva wandered down every blind alley without ever arriving at a way. They have tangled themselves in pacts and pledges, some mutually contradictory and many whose tendency is to break up the supposed solidarity of the League. Now the tangle has tripped them up, and it is not easy to find anyone who trusts in these pacts and pledges. Seventeen years after the foundation of the League which started with such high hopes, they find themselves staring into the terrifying darkness of a total lack of confidence; consequently of a total lack of security. And this not because of the lack of armed force, but because of the widespread lack of national honesty; nations having joined the League without honestly accepting its Covenant.

It is the lack of confidence which constitutes the tragic loss, for without mutual confidence no civilized corporate life is possible, and the mere lack of security is as nothing to the lack of confidence.

## INTRODUCTION

We can be happy and even exultant in situations of extreme danger, but if man could have no confidence in the truth, the kindness and the courage of his fellowman, security, if it could be had, would be worthless. It is not, however, to be had on those terms. Man who breaks his word, tortures his fellows, babbles incessantly of his fears (and is too often found attributing them to the 'women and children' who are the first to be destroyed by his bellicosity) is truly not worth preserving and he will not be preserved. Only a rational psychology can serve us to understand how it is that the individual men we know, politicians and all, may become in the mass, or as representatives or rulers of the mass, creatures whose word no one can trust and whose fears and resentments have made them cruel to a degree unimagined till the war, supported by churches and moralists everywhere, broke down the very foundations of human society.

The optimism of those who persuaded themselves that the war was righteous, or at any rate necessary, and that the moment it was over we would turn to, as victors, to re-make the world better than before, was indeed far more horrible than the depression that has now overtaken the believers in destructive force as an instrument of international policy. Because out of their depression may come, perhaps, a turning of the heart: one of those miracles that do

## INTRODUCTION

occur in the human mind and there only. So that what seemed necessity one day is seen next day to be absurdity; so that what they jeered at one day as foolish idealism suddenly becomes plainest common sense. Miracles do happen. We English believed not so long ago in witchcraft, in slavery, in the subjection of women. No decent Englishman maintains these beliefs now. To make war impossible he must think it so. A hard command; conceded!

Can we say that there is at least one world-wide pact which should be exempted from condemnation; one which contains no reference to possible sanctions? The Pact of Paris (called Kellogg in the United States and Briand-Kellogg in France) contains merely a declaration that to use war as an instrument of national policy is a crime of which the signatories will never be guilty, and an undertaking to settle all disputes by peaceable means. What harm can the most captious find in such declarations? None. There is nothing wrong with the declarations; war is a crime and we do well to condemn it, if we are honest in our condemnation. There was everything wrong about the circumstances in which the declarations were made. More will be said (Part One, Chapter v) about the inception and negotiation of the plan. Here let us ask only a few questions.

*War as an instrument of national policy* is repudiated.

## INTRODUCTION

If indeed the signatories had been serious, would they not have immediately set themselves to the task of reducing and gradually abolishing the instrument (armaments) of that instrument (war)? Should we believe in the reformation of a burglar who renounced burglary, but insisted on retaining his jemmy, his revolver and acetylene apparatus? Ever since the Pact of Paris was signed by nearly all the states in the world, the threat of war, kept in the background, but betrayed by the persistent clinging to national armaments, has *remained the instrument of national policy*, of international blackmail, of power-politics, all the world over, as before. And when there is a debate on armaments in the British Parliament, ministers are not ashamed to assert that we can negotiate better when other states know we are fully armed; 'we count for more in the councils of Europe'. It is true. It is the horrible truth and a scorching commentary on the common membership of the League. Germany did well to withdraw her membership before making her national armaments comparable with the national armaments of those who remained Members. Those who retained the means to do ill deeds made ill deeds done. We have all solemnly forsworn the use of poison gas; we all manufacture the various sorts and the instruments for their use. We all morally broke the Pact of Paris when we used the

## INTRODUCTION

Disarmament Conference, each one of us, to argue for the retention of the particular arms we found most formidable for our particular purposes, while uniting to reprobate Germany's sole plea for equality; and again when we adjourned the conference *sine die*. But armaments depend on policy and there never was any hope for a conference which would not touch policy.

Even before its signature, however, any meaning the Pact might have had was whittled away by a series of 'interpretations'; not 'reservations', oh no! To please the idealistic Americans, we passed the Pact in all its simplicity, but by various glosses we made it possible for any competent foreign secretary to drive a coach and four through it.

The Pact of Paris was signed in Paris on August 27th, 1928. The armies of Britain, France and Belgium remained in occupation of parts of the Rhineland till late in 1930. (The Americans had cleared out of Coblenz when the French entered the Ruhr.) In 1932 Japan, a Member, attacked and for all practical purposes annexed Manchuria, a province of her fellow-Member, China. During 1932-6 Bolivia and Paraguay, both Members, waged war on each other. Italy, about the same period, attacked, conquered and annexed Ethiopia, a fellow-Member; this war was prepared carefully, openly, for months beforehand. Not the smallest

## INTRODUCTION

beginning was made after 1928 in establishing economic peace and international co-operation, in spite of the excellent recommendations of the Economic Conference of 1927; but then, that was a conference of expert economists and not of romantic politicians. In 1929, the Young Plan actually endeavoured still to perpetuate the running sore of Reparations, which was healed only by the dangerous caustic of repudiation in 1931.

If anyone had had the faintest confidence in the renunciation of war, should we not have heard bells ringing and thanksgiving services and proclamations everywhere? What mafficking or armistice celebrations of mere victory could have compared with the uplifting of the hearts of the peoples, with the deep joy of the women, because this load of crime and folly was at last lifted from burdened Pilgrim's back?

No one rejoiced. There were no bells. The Churches of the Prince of Peace were almost silent. No one believed that the Pact would be kept in spirit and in truth. The cynicism of it was devastating.

Cynicism is a corroding acid. Better have nothing to do with ideals than use them to mask base purposes. Certainly some of the rulers who have spoken peace have meant what they said, but — to quote Bernard Shaw — they were not pacifists 'in the

## INTRODUCTION

same burning sense that they were rate-payers'. They were sentimentalists, because they hoped to attain peace without having the courage to pay the very heavy price of peace; and sentimentality is but an aspect of cynicism.

Now the men who made the world-war are nearly all leaving the stage. A 'Call to Save the League' appeared on New Year's Day 1936, signed, among others, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. Churchill and Mr. Lloyd George. They still advocate 'military action' by the League; 'if necessary' of course. Those who suffered the war may still be suffering from the effects of the shock, yet some are not so old but they may learn from the trials and errors of the post-war world. Their sons and daughters may yet win free of that woeful obsession, and become trusted because they are trustworthy; trusted in a way not to be attained by those who beat the war drums in 1914.

Although this is in the main a plea for a historical and psychological consideration of the causes that have led us to the present humiliating situation, when the League is so discredited that although it meets in Assembly and in Council, it is almost impotent to accomplish anything but routine business; although we must understand the causes of failure in the past, this understanding should lead to fresh determination to make the future better



## INTRODUCTION

than the past and, avoiding old errors and vain recriminations and lamentations, get on with the work. The generation of younger men and women now coming into power must not lay all blame for their failures on the past, bad as that may have been. The future is theirs to show how much better they can do.

### NOTE

*The Peace Ballot.* The questions asked were:

1. Should Great Britain remain a member of the League of Nations?

2. Are you in favour of an all-round reduction of armaments by international agreement?

3. Are you in favour of the all-round abolition of national military and naval air-craft by international agreement?

4. Should the manufacture and sale of armaments for private profit be prohibited by international agreement?

5. Do you consider that, if a nation insists on attacking another the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by

(a) economic and non-military measures?

(b) if necessary, military measures?

The answers as officially tabulated were as follow:

Question	Yes	No	Doubtful	Abstentions	Christian Pacifist	Total
1	11,090,387	355,883	10,470	102,425		11,559,165
2	10,470,489	862,775	12,062	213,839		11,559,165
3	9,533,558	1,689,786	16,976	318,845		11,559,165
4	10,417,329	775,415	15,076	351,345		11,559,165
5a	10,027,608	635,074	27,255	855,107	14,121	11,559,165
5b	6,784,368	2,351,981	40,893	2,364,441	17,482	11,559,165

PART ONE

THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY



## CHAPTER I

# THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE

Unfortunate association of the League with the Peace Treaties — The first Secretariat — Confidence the prime essential — Atmosphere of Paris — U.S.A. abandons Peace Treaty, Covenant and Treaty of Guarantee — Lack of confidence among the Allies — Two incompatibles: loot and Fourteen Points — The Secret Treaties, their effect on (1) Russia (2) Japan (3) Italy — Manchukuo and Abyssinia the consequences — Military necessity and the price of alliances — Incompatibility of traditional diplomacy with honest working of the Covenant — Sanctions cannot be entrusted to diplomats in the old tradition

PERHAPS no degree of failure on the part of the League of Nations, whose Covenant was incorporated in the treaties that ended the war, ought to surprise us. The marvel was that any international organization should have been floated in the seething turmoil of post-war politics and that it has survived for seventeen years and is likely to survive unless some of its friends destroy it. That it has had any success, indeed, is due to the desperate necessity for it. If it were destroyed, unless all international traffic were destroyed with it, people would find it necessary to remake it next day. Even the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, which for years

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

abused it as a capitalist league and considered it worse than useless, has, for reasons of its own, seen fit to become a Member and a very active one.

We may regret that it was made an integral part of the punitive treaties, but this was not necessary, and could easily be altered; on the other hand there can be little doubt that if its foundation had been postponed for several years, it might never have been founded. The curious blend of spiritual exaltation and grasping greed that moved the world in 1919, while it certainly was not the best source of inspiration for an enduring creative effort, was better than the sick disenchantment which was to follow. To its first Secretary-General and the remarkable International Civil Service that he recruited is due the large measure of order and stability maintained for so many years by headquarters at Geneva. If the first requisite for an efficient League is confidence, one may truly say that the first secretariat earned that confidence in full measure. Can we say as much of the way in which the League was started and of the foreign policy of the States Members?

How did the begetters of the League set out to win the confidence of the world? The begetters were the Allied and Associated Powers, victors in the war. They drafted the Covenant; they constituted themselves original Members; they decided which

## THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE

should be permanent members of the Council and they invited certain neutral Powers to become Members. Neither Russia (their late ally, but at that period still in a state of flux) nor any of the vanquished was invited to join the League, although Germany had expressed an ardent desire to become a Member and, in her then socialist-pacifist phase, might have been a useful one. The new state of Yugoslavia, at the instigation of whose Servian government the fatal murder of the Austrian arch-duke had in 1914 started the war, was held fit to be a foundation Member of the League. Austria and Bulgaria were elected at the first Assembly in 1920; Hungary at the third in 1922; but Germany had to wait six years (eight years after the last shot was fired) till, in 1926, after a series of discouraging manœuvres, she was at last admitted with a permanent seat on the Council.

It is difficult to exaggerate the effects of this initial error. We are too apt to think that all should have been well after the admission of Germany to the League in 1926. We forget or we never understood the inevitable consequences of that long exclusion. The confidence of the whole world was essential, if the League was to function as intended. Confidence that its legal judgments would be, humanly speaking, untainted by politics; that its political acts would be inspired by an intelligent

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

concern for the good of the whole; that the States Members would honestly co-operate in and through the League and would not, by secret conspiracies and partial military alliances, undermine its solidarity. To win this sort of confidence was immeasurably more important for the young League and more conducive to the security of its Members than the possession of any amount of potential force distributed among them, and not honestly directed to international ends; therefore not, in the nature of things, to be reckoned on with certainty.

All can see now, as a few did in 1919, that the wisest policy would have been to admit, as foundation Members, all states willing to subscribe to the Covenant. But it was useless to expect calm rational conduct under the conditions then prevailing. The fissiparous forces at a conference where many Allies are collected to exploit a smashing victory are, in any case, so great that the introduction of ideals (for any but rhetorical purposes, where they are infinitely useful) is an invitation to dispute and disruption.

The actions of politicians at such conferences are largely pre-determined by the forces then available and the engagements already made. Observers, whose comparative leisure and freedom from commitments enabled them to survey the whole scene with vision unobstructed by a host of conflicting

## THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE

and too-urgent problems, might see a little further ahead and be dismayed by a series of decisions which they could regard only as 'sowing the seeds of future wars'. Not for them the triumphant declamation about the fruits of victory! But the actual protagonists of the treaties were too often prisoners of their own precedent mistakes and could, in fact, very often have done no other than they did. Private persons, members of associations, who may very likely have failed to keep united their fraction of a fraction of a party having some common purpose, are sometimes unduly severe in their judgment of governments, which have somehow to contrive to keep united their cabinets and their supporters in Parliament and in the country; in a war, governments must also rally the bulk of their own people, their armies and their allies. The inducements they have to offer are often very costly and, not infrequently, conflicting.

Although it is still possible to think that Mr. Lloyd George, by clever use and support of President Wilson, could have retrieved very much more than he did of what he knew, and later on admitted to be better things, one has to take into account the need for hurry and the dangerous confusion of the time. And the purely personal element cannot be ignored. The 'big Three' were Wilson, Clemenceau and Lloyd George. Clemenceau, in private, vented



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

his acrid humour on the 'non-conformist minister'<sup>1</sup> in countless *bons mots*, among which the most notorious was his comment on the Fourteen Points: 'Quatorze commandements! C'est un peu raide! Le bon Dieu n'en avait que dix!' And it was not long before the academic President appeared to Mr. Lloyd George's shrewd but volatile judgment as a mainly comic figure.

Popular feeling at the time had also to be considered, bad in London, worse in Paris; feeling partly due to war-propaganda and politicians' rabid speeches, all necessary for keeping war fever to boiling point; but also partly to the effects of invasion, which made Paris an unhappy choice. At that time it was considered impossible that the vanquished should be admitted as co-Members of the League with the victors; no overt distinction could have been made between them, and there were people in England and far more in France who would have thought it an outrage to be asked to sit down at the same table and on an equality with Germans. This was felt with an intensity that is difficult to realize now; but if one reads any of the contemporary descriptions of how the two German delegations were treated at Versailles<sup>2</sup>, one is compelled to admit that it was the victors and not the

<sup>1</sup> J. M. Keynes's name for President Wilson.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Germans at Versailles*, by Victor Schiff, and the daily newspapers of May 9th and June 29th, 1919.

## THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE

vanquished who were then so filled with hate that a complete League was out of the question. The explanation — some would say the justification — of this was that Germany had been invaded only by Russian troops on the east and enemy aircraft on the west, and that no part of German territory had been occupied before the armistice.

Another reason for the absence of hate in Germany at that time was that the people had made their revolution; had repudiated and contemned their rulers, who had contributed to make the war inevitable. They scorned and detested their fugitive emperor so much that they had little animosity left for the victors. This was a state of mind which, if the victors had been wise, should have been exploited to the utmost for peace purposes. But the victors were not wise and it was unwise to expect wisdom of them in the intoxication of victory. We were to meet again, as so often before and since, the disenchanted, who had persuaded themselves that, like Sir Charles Grandison, once the Allies had prevailed in the great duel, they would show justice, if not generosity, to the prostrate foe, and would hasten to bind up the bleeding wounds of Europe; would, at least, not be solely occupied, each component Power, in pressing its selfish national aims in despite of the rest of the world.

Let us ask ourselves here, as we shall so often

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

have to do, whether a League, whose most powerful Members were in the state of mind described above, was fit to be entrusted with the weapon of sanctions, based on impartial judgment and united action.

The United States repudiated the signature of its own President, rejected the whole treaty of Versailles, including the Covenant in whose formation Wilson had taken a prominent part, and later made its own peace with Germany. Besides signing the treaty, Wilson had consented to a tri-partite treaty between the United States, Great Britain and France, guaranteeing France against attack by Germany. This also was rejected by the Senate and consequently also by Britain.

The abandonment of this proposed treaty is one of the important landmarks of this period of European history, because France had yielded her plan for the creation in the Rhineland of a buffer state protected by French troops, only on the understanding that her security was to be guaranteed by the tri-partite treaty and, after this had lapsed, never ceased to claim her right to special compensation, either by treaties of mutual assistance or otherwise. Until the armies of occupation were finally withdrawn from German soil (autumn 1930) there were frequently-renewed efforts on the part of the French to create an impression that the inhabitants of the Rhineland themselves desired autonomy and,

## THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE

in the sacred name of self-determination (a popular cry at that time) should have their desire granted. Although one may feel glad that this treaty did lapse and Britain was not thereby even more securely tied to the foreign policy of France under Poincaré and Tardieu, it is necessary to take into account the prevalent French view, which was that the only way to secure France was to hold Germany down forcibly for ever and ever. There were a good many Frenchmen who doubted whether this was a feasible policy; there must have been few indeed and rarely wise who reflected that with the passage of time, as Germany was treated, so she would re-act. Léon Blum was one of these few.

The reasons for the complete withdrawal of the United States were too many and too complex for treatment here. Consternation was certainly felt by the Allies at the defection of the Associated Power, and much eloquence was vainly expended in reproaches and exhortations to return. None of the Allies, however, was willing to admit that there were, broadly speaking, two main categories of American objections to the treaty of Versailles which could not be overcome by cajolery: one related to the sanctions clauses of the Covenant, the other to the scramble for loot which largely affected the rest of the treaty.

The Allies would not abandon the loot for which

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

some of them, at least, had been fighting and they were so drunken with their seeming, although temporary, omnipotence that they scorned to establish a League with the modest pretension of helping to negotiate and keep the peace by only offering opportunities for arbitration and co-operation. This alone would have been a formidable task; but victory tends to induce megalomania, and these victors endeavoured to scale the heaven of permanent peace while grinding their late enemies under their heels. They signed a Covenant by which they undertook not to go to war, but they trusted each other so little that they undertook in that very same Covenant to go to war with any state which broke the Covenant by going to war. It seems odd that it did not occur to them that if Members might break their promise to refrain from war, they might possibly, even probably, break their promise to punish the aggressor; especially if he were an ally, or dangerously formidable, or if their own domestic situation were precarious, or their armaments inadequate. It is not reasonable to expect a state to commit suicide. They will tell the absolute pacifist so. And a failure of sanctions is far more damaging than the failure of a single state. It is a failure of the whole League which, having based its authority on physical force, sees that force and therefore that authority broken.

At Versailles, where President Wilson remained

## THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE

aloof from his own delegation and still more aloof from public opinion in the States, he found himself inexorably confronted by two incompatibles: the promises contained in the Secret Treaties which the Allies had made with each other on the one hand, and the promises implicit in his own Fourteen Points, accepted by Germany as a basis upon which to declare an armistice and to negotiate peace on the other.<sup>1</sup> It is unlikely that we shall ever really know how much Wilson, when he led America into the war, understood about those treaties. It is known that Seymour Cocks's book was seen lying on his table. To the Senate Commission after the War he denied knowledge of them. The most charitable hypothesis is that he believed his speeches subsequent to the treaties were understood by the Allies to supersede them. He was to find, and the discovery killed him by inches, that they were not.

The Secret Treaties were negotiated between certain of the Allied Powers and certain other Powers that they wished to draw to their side (or in the case of Russia, confirm in the Alliance). They were exhibited to the world by the Bolsheviki in December 1917, but they caused very little public interest in a propaganda-doped Europe and if it had not been for their publication by the *Manchester Guardian*, they might have remained secret very much longer than

<sup>1</sup> See Note 1, Chapter I.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

they did. The Bolshevik Government, in publishing them, repudiated all part in them and the British Government abandoned the privileges in Persia, conceded to it by the Tsarist Government. They were republished in book form, by the Union of Democratic Control, 1918, with notes by F. Seymour Cocks.

Some have maintained that far too much importance has been attributed to those Secret Treaties and that the word 'secret' has been twisted to mean something more sinister than was actually perpetrated. It is only necessary here to say that they were (1) important because they were the price of the Alliances which won the War; that they were (2) secret, because it was doubtful whether the British, who had entered into the War with such high-flown ideals, would have been quite so united if they had understood the war-aims which had been secretly added to the liberation of Belgium (cynics may think that they were kept secret in order that they might be more easily repudiated); that they were (3) disastrous, not only because they were radically unjust, proposed in some instances quite unworkable changes, and influenced the United States to quit association with Powers which, having negotiated such agreements, did not clearly apprise them of their terms; but also because the most sensational acts of aggression since 1919 — the aggression of

## THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE

Japan in Manchuria and of Italy in Ethiopia — were closely connected with the unfulfilled promises made to Japan and Italy in the Secret Treaties.

It may be said that the origins of recent events go much further back than the first of the Secret Treaties and that it is arbitrary and unfair to go back only as far as 1915, whereas, in order to understand Italy's claims to a Mediterranean empire, we ought to go back to the foundation of France's and Great Britain's African Empires; also that Japan's demands on China had their ultimate origin in events that took place long before Germany was driven out of Kiao Chau. That is certainly true. But one must begin somewhere, and a large part of the world being in the melting-pot during the War, and the Allies having claimed that the new settlement was, for the first time, going to be a just one — unlike the mere Victors' Peace which Germany had imposed on Russia at Brest-Litovsk — it is fair to regard the Treaty of Versailles and the Secret Treaties upon which it was so largely based, as epochal.

We were saved from some of the worst consequences of the war-diplomacy of Sir Edward Grey and M. Briand by the collapse of Tsarist Russia and the subsequent repudiation by the Bolsheviki of all the Secret Treaties made with the other Allies. Britain was therefore not called upon to honour the



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

engagement made by the Asquith Government on March 12, 1915, by which it undertook to consent to the annexation by Russia of the Straits and Constantinople, in return for 'security for its economic interests and a similar benevolent attitude' on the part of Russia 'towards the political aspirations of England in other parts'. Among these aspirations was the transfer to Britain of the sphere of influence in the neutral zone of Persia (a zone lying between the two zones allotted to Russia and Britain respectively). Russia was also to have vast concessions in Turkey, in Europe and Turkey-in-Asia, as well as the islands of Imbros and Tenedos. Russia was to be given 'full liberty of action' in the districts of Ispahan and Yezd, a concession calculated to make anyone shudder, who knew Tsarist Russia's pre-War record in Persia.

In a telegram from Sazonov (the Russian Foreign Minister) to Isvolsky (the Russian ambassador to Paris) just before the revolution, Russia, in return for supporting the demands of France for Alsace and Lorraine, the Saar Valley and the establishment of a 'neutral state' in the Rhineland, claimed 'complete liberty in establishing her western frontiers'. Russia particularly claimed 'to insist on the exclusion of the Polish question from the subject of international discussion and on the elimination of all attempts to place the future of Poland under the

## THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE

guarantee and the control of the Powers'. This request meant that Tsarist Russia proposed to add German and Austrian Poland (and possibly more) to the existing Russian Poland and to be given as free a hand there for cruelty and oppression as she had used in Russian Poland, the Baltic States and Finland, as well as against the Jews. M. Briand replied through M. Isvolsky, that 'the satisfaction of the wishes contained in your telegram will meet with no difficulties'. M. Briand was, later on, a first favourite at Geneva as the great orator of Peace. Orator he certainly was.

One cannot fail to be struck by the reckless willingness to enlarge the borders and the power of the Russian Empire, so long as it remained the Empire of the Tsars; that is to say notoriously treacherous, aggressive and intriguing. To anyone who remembers the frequent alarms during the nineteenth century and the first fourteen years of the twentieth about Russia's mischief-making in Persia, in Afghanistan, in China, in the Slav states of Europe, this somersault in policy was a source of wonderment. A fantastic turn of Fortune's wheel, however, brought the situation round a circle and a half — as if indeed some ironic spirit planned to save western Europe in despite of itself, for that time at least — when the Bolsheviks gave up the promised loot and Britain abandoned her claims in Persia.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

Turning now to Japan, which had of late years been steadily encroaching on China, we find her (in accordance with the Anglo-Japanese Alliance which had endured since 1902) declaring herself on the side of the Allies on August 23rd, 1914, and announcing, through her Premier, Count Okuma, 'Japan has no ulterior motive, no desire to secure more territory, no thought of depriving China or other people of anything which they now possess'. One has learnt to regard such assurances as the frequent preliminary to precisely such assaults on the sovereignty of another state as are so solemnly repudiated. On the fall of Kiao Chau, January 18th, 1915 (till then in German hands), Japan presented China with a formidable list of twenty-one demands which would, if conceded, have made the whole of China her vassal state, putting even China's foreign trade at the mercy of Japan. It does not appear that any serious objection was raised at the time by the other Allies; Russia, in 1916, made with Japan a public treaty, with secret clauses dividing up their interests in China to the exclusion of the other Allies.

These Russo-Japanese treaties were repudiated and broadcast to the world by the Bolsheviki in 1917, as a sample of '*bourgeois* diplomacy'. Nevertheless the Versailles Treaty handed over to Japan the rights which Germany had held in Shantung,

## THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE

and it was not till the Washington Conference in 1922 that, in less murky air, Britain restored Weihai-wei, and Japan restored the province of Shantung to China. There followed a Nine-Power Treaty which included Japan and China with other great Powers and should have secured China from aggression, and the open door in China for the rest.

With only a few unimportant islands as their share of war-plunder, while large portions of territory in Europe were carved up, and German colonies in Africa distributed to other Allies, Japanese patriots felt that they had not gained from the War what was their due. Australian and American immigration laws closed vast territories to Japanese settlement and the long-continued civil war in China provided a great temptation to aggression. It is likely, too, that Japanese rulers made their own inferences from certain Sino-British clashes between Canton and Hong Kong in 1925 and from the unhindered dispatch by Sir Austen Chamberlain of a 'Shanghai Defence Force' in 1927 and from the maintenance and activity of the British navy on the Yangtse about that time; all, of course, justified as merely protecting British persons and property, but all tending to increase the already immense difficulties of Chiang-Kai-Shek in his efforts to make a united China, and all tending to serious infringements of Chinese sovereignty; China

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

being a fellow-Member of the League. During civil war, however, it may not be very clear in whom sovereignty resides. Where the carcass lies, there will the vultures assemble. By her aggression in Manchuria, which resulted in the setting up of the puppet-state of Manchukuo in 1932, Japan certainly broke her treaties, the Covenant, and the Pact of Paris, and she rendered herself legally liable to any sanctions the League might decide to impose. She gambled and won that trick.

The promises made to Italy were devised to buy her off from her Triple Alliance with the German and Austrian Empires. The Treaty of London, signed by Sir Edward Grey (Britain), M. Cambon (France), Count Benckendorff (Russia), and Marchese Imperiali (Italy) on April 26th, 1915, gave to Italy, among other territorial concessions, the Trentino, Southern Tirol (a purely Germanic part of Austria, the ancient home of Andreas Hofer), Trieste, the *port of Fiume* and a large part of the coast of *Dalmatia*, including many valuable ports and islands. Special attention should be paid to Article 13, which ran as follows:

‘Should France and Great Britain extend their colonial possessions in Africa at the expense of Germany, they will admit in principle Italy’s right to demand compensation by way of an extension

## THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE

of her possessions in Eritrea, Somaliland, and Libya and *the colonial areas adjoining French and British colonies.*'

To this provision Mr. Cocks appended the following note:<sup>1</sup>

'Eritrea is on the Red Sea. Such an extension of Italy's possessions is only possible, in the case of Eritrea and Somaliland, at the expense of the Soudan, French and British Somaliland, British East Africa, *or of Abyssinia, a neutral state.* In the case of Libya it is only possible at the expense of Egypt, Tunis, or the French Sahara.'

The words italicized by me in the above passages are those to which special attention is here directed. Italy demanded and received a great deal of what was promised in the Treaty of London, but President Wilson made a stand on the question of the port of Fiume, which was finally decided (September 12th, 1915) by a filibustering expedition of the militant Italian poet d'Annunzio; the Dalmatian coast was given to Yugoslavia (thereby depriving both Austria and Hungary of any seaport and by the same stroke disappointing Italy), while France, Britain and Egypt showed no intention whatever of conceding any of their rights to Italy as a set-off to their

<sup>1</sup> *The Secret Treaties*, by F. Seymour Cocks. Union of Democratic Control. 1918.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

appropriation of German colonies in Africa. *Remained only 'Abyssinia, a neutral state'.*

We read, in Mr. Nicolson's book, vivid and entertaining accounts of what a nuisance the Italian delegates made of themselves at Versailles.<sup>1</sup> Creditors who insist on presenting their bills to debtors who have no intention whatever of paying *are* a nuisance. The Allies do not seem to have had any prohibitive qualms about giving away what did not belong to them, but when it came to dividing their own African spoils with Italy, they could not consent. *Remained only Abyssinia.* Mrs. Dugdale, in her admirable memoir of Lord Balfour, relates how, when Signor Orlando left Paris on April 22nd, 1919, in a rage at Wilson's refusal of Fiume, the British Foreign Secretary, at his own dinner-table in the Rue Nitot, made his assembled guests smile by remarking, 'I must go now and put on my wading boots, to say good-bye to Orlando. He was in tears when I left him, and I have no reason to suppose that he has stopped crying since'.<sup>2</sup> Others, including mothers and wives of Italian and Abyssinian soldiers, are crying still over the results of that very bad business.

Sundry negotiations between Britain and Italy over 'spheres of influence' in Abyssinia, which took

<sup>1</sup> See *Peacemaking* 1919, Book I, Chapter VII; Book II, Chapter VII.

<sup>2</sup> *Arthur James Balfour*, vol. ii, p. 271.

## THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE

place years later during Sir Austen Chamberlain's tenure of office as Foreign Secretary, no doubt encouraged Mussolini to expect a 'benevolent attitude' towards Italian encroachments on Abyssinia and so alarmed her government that it appealed to the League of Nations and the negotiations were suspended. Some people noted this as a danger signal.

Sore and revengeful over the loss of Dalmatia and its islands, which they had been promised (but to which they had no moral right); over the refusal of any concessions in Africa (to which none of the Allies had any moral right); doubtless also, over the tone of the Allied Powers at Versailles (which was no more than they deserved), the Italians, after grabbing Fiume and getting away with it, after bombarding Corfu in 1923 without being penalized (on the contrary), found the time ripe in 1934 for preparing the Ethiopian adventure. The only surprising thing is that anyone should have been surprised at that or at the conduct of the League of Nations which, in December 1935,<sup>1</sup> transferred the final responsibility for a decision on effective sanctions against Italy to France and Britain, which for various reasons already had bad consciences about Italian 'compensation' in Africa.

Easy now to see how the two most outstanding

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VI.



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

breaches of the Covenant had some of their roots in the Secret Treaties and the Versailles Conference, and how some of the Great Powers who derived such immense profits there and who seemed to be having it all their own way there may have felt later some qualms about interfering with the two Allies who came off with less to show to their expectant people. The seed sown at Versailles not only germinated in Manchuria and Ethiopia, but inserted itself into the very fabric of the League of Nations and began to split it. Can the split be repaired?

One may take too high a line of abstract political morality, unless one realizes that, once having embarked on a war so formidable as that of 1914-18, all considerations of any kind whatever had to be subordinated to the one purpose of winning the war. The claim of military necessity is implicit in the claim that the war is righteous. The Germans found poison gas and unrestricted submarine warfare 'necessary'; the Allies found it 'necessary' to retaliate with poison gas, to starve the civilian population of Germany and Austria (a manœuvre which took heaviest toll of babies) and to buy alliances with disgraceful promises, some of which were disgracefully kept (such as handing over Austrian Tirol to Italy) while others were disgracefully broken. The end determines the means.

## THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE

If you must win, you must do all that is necessary to win. This is perhaps the greatest of the horrors of war.

The contention in this book is not — and no one is justified in representing that it is — that the Secret Treaties or the Peace Treaties were exceptional or exceptionally wicked. They were not. They were exceptionally disastrous because, like the war, they were on a very large scale; because they were made at a period when the development of scientific warfare made it more than ever necessary to put a stop to medieval practices carried out by twentieth-century weapons; and because they did much to cripple the first years of an endeavour to follow a new gospel. But they were in the tradition and they raised very little protest among the victor nations. The Secret Treaties were largely the work of Sir Edward Grey and M. Briand, who were later acclaimed as bulwarks of the League of Nations. They were all, all, honourable men. If Sir Edward Grey had been a swindler or a brute — but no! No English gentleman was ever more honourable. True, most of the English people and all the Americans were hoodwinked by them, but that too was in the tradition: you must temper the truth to the shorn sheep. Foreign offices have always exhibited a certain economy in truth-telling. You cannot tell all the truth all the time.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

People say that Germany would have done the same, or worse. No doubt.

*Others, I am not the worst,  
Have willed more mischief than they durst.*

*. . . . .  
And through their reins in ice and fire  
Fear contended with desire.*

The more convinced were the Allies that the Secret Treaties and the Peace Treaties were all *en règle*, the more unassailable are my contentions (1) that from such beginnings and with such personnel it was unreasonable to expect from the League anything better than we got, and (2) that a League of that sort was unfit to be trusted with the tremendous coercive power of sanctions. Sanctions have failed, and failed ignominiously, but not more ignominiously than the Secret Treaties and the Peace Treaties; while a violent and necessarily partial effort to carry them out would have been catastrophic.

None the less we do well to be ashamed of the whole ugly business. 'Faith unfaithful kept them falsely true' is not a verdict upon which we can pride ourselves. The conviction that the end of sanctions was in their beginning does not in the least commit us to the belief that 'to understand everything is to forgive everything' — one of the

## THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE

most muddle-headed pieces of sentimentality that have ever been repeated with the fervour and intelligence of a green parrot. It is not man's prerogative to forgive sins, though he may aspire to forgive sinners. We are not to justify Japan for invading China, or Italy for bombarding Corfu and annexing Ethiopia; but it is a wholesome exercise of our consciences to ask ourselves how much we, the Righteous, the Law-abiding, the Unaggressive, contributed to those sins. We might also consider whether, if the peacocking and cock-crowing of the aggressive Powers is provocative, there is not also much provocation in the moralizing, the preaching, the recriminating, the judging and justifying of the satiated and therefore unaggressive Powers.

The League would be cleaner if others were to emulate Dr. Nansen who, God knows, felt hotly enough about the playing politics which spoilt so much of his constructive labour and yet, single-heartedly set himself to make the thing work. There is no reason why a new fashion in international politics should not replace the unreal fancies of bogus honour, of fantastic touchiness, of nauseating rhetoric which have been the cover for equally nauseating cynicism; no reason why the League should not be soberly useful, once the men are born who will have it so.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

What is intolerable is the pretension that though pre-League diplomacy may have been black and bloody, post-League diplomacy is so radiantly pure that it can be trusted with the sword of the Lord and of Gideon; in other words, with the threat and the use of starvation, incendiary bombs, high explosives, poison gas, and — doubtless in time — a death-ray.

### NOTE

The following are the texts of declarations by the Allied and Associated Powers, in faith of which the German Government entered upon negotiations for an armistice.

(1) PRESIDENT WILSON'S CONSENT TO PROPOSE AN ARMISTICE TO THE ALLIES:— 'Having received the solemn and explicit assurance of the German Government that it unreservedly accepts the terms of peace laid down in his address to the Congress of the United States on the 8th of January 1918' (the Fourteen Points) 'and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent addresses, particularly the address of the 27th September, . . . the President of the United States feels that he cannot decline to take up with the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated' (i.e. the Allies) 'the question of an armistice.'

*October 23rd, 1918.*

(2) ALLIES' REPLY TO THE ABOVE:— 'The Allied Governments have given careful consideration to the correspondence which has passed between the President of the United States and the German Government. Subject to the qualifications which follow, they declare their willingness to make peace with the Government of Germany on the terms of peace laid down in the President's address to Congress of January 8' (the Fourteen Points) 'and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent addresses.'

## THE MATRIX OF THE LEAGUE

The 'qualifications' referred to were two:

(a) 'Freedom of action at the Peace Conference in regard to the so-called Freedom of the Seas.' (Point 2 of the Fourteen Points.)

(b) 'In the conditions of peace laid down in his address to Congress of January 8, 1918, the President declared that invaded territories must be restored as well as evacuated and freed; the Allied Governments feel that no doubt ought to be allowed to exist as to what this provision implies. By it they understand that compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany, by land, by sea and from the air.'

*November 5th, 1918.*

President Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' added to his 'subsequent addresses' make a total of twenty-three conditions of which Mr. Harold Nicolson truly says 'only four can, with any accuracy be said to have been incorporated in the Treaties of peace'.—*Peace-making 1919*, p. 44.

Mr. Lloyd George complains (*War Memoirs*, Vol. VI, p. 3274) that when a Conference of Allies met in Paris after President Wilson had received the German and Austrian requests for an armistice, he did not communicate them at once, but 'was sitting on them', and 'decided to frame and dispatch his own reply without any consultation with his associates in the common enterprise'. The Central Powers could, however, know nothing of these domestic affairs of the Allies and accepted their formal notification of November 5th, 1918, in faith of which they entered upon negotiations for an armistice.



## CHAPTER II

# THE LETTER OF THE LAW

The Covenant of the League — Reduction of Armaments — Arbitration and Article 11 — Neglect of this Article by the great Powers — A homely diplomacy better than legalism — Value and misuse of legal forms — Aggression and the gap in the Covenant — Arbitration practicable only by goodwill — Sanctions and the difficulty of making exceptions — Presumed infallibility of the Council — Italy as a judge — The time-element — Difficulty of pre-organization of economic sanctions — What is a League War? — Would it, in practice, differ from other wars?

UNDER the conditions sketched in the preceding chapter, the Covenant was presented to the world as the body of law which was to form the basis of the League and to which all its Members subscribed, although none of the Neutrals or of the vanquished had taken any formal part in the legislation. It took effect on January 20th, 1920. The following is a brief summary for those who have not studied the text.

The Preamble is worth quoting in full<sup>1</sup> because it is the victors' own statement of the principles by which they intended to be guided. Well would it have been for them and the rest of the world if they

<sup>1</sup> See Note 1, Chapter II.



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

had constantly tested their acts by these principles of their own devising.

After Articles establishing the rules of Membership and the administrative bodies (Assembly, Council, Secretariat) the main provisions deal with the following subjects, among which it is noteworthy that reduction of armaments takes the first place:

1. Reduction of Armaments (Articles 8, 9);
2. Provisions for Arbitration (Articles 11, 12, 13, 14, 15);
3. Guarantees against Aggression and Provision for Sanctions (Articles 10, 16, 17);
4. Registration and Review of Treaties (Articles 18, 19);
5. Mandates (Article 22);
6. Social activities (Articles 23, 24, 25);
7. Amendments to the Covenant (Article 26).

The argument of this book is chiefly concerned with the first three of these categories.

**REDUCTION OF ARMAMENTS.** The Covenant recognized that the maintenance of peace required the reduction of armaments 'to the lowest point consistent with national safety' (safety of Members, be it understood; for the armaments of the vanquished were reduced, by the Peace Treaties, far below any military standard of safety) 'and the enforcement

## THE LETTER OF THE LAW

by common action of international obligations'. These obligations were intended to refer to the undertaking of armed sanctions by the League, but the breaking up of League Membership by partial treaties tempted groups of Members to consider their obligations to their allies as of more urgent importance than their obligations to the League and encouraged them to compete against other groups. Could anything else be expected from partial treaties?

The consideration of the reduction and limitation of armaments took first place in the young League's activities, and besides (1) the provision in the Covenant of a Permanent Military Commission to advise the Council, there were established (2) a Temporary Mixed Commission, which included civilians; (3) the Third Committee of the Assembly, which met only during the sessions of the Assembly, to deal with such questions of disarmament as came before the Assembly; (4) the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference; (5) the Disarmament Conference which began to sit on February 2nd, 1932, under the Presidency of the late Mr. Arthur Henderson, and which stands adjourned *sine die*, but still keeps in being. A whole section of the League Secretariat, for many years under Señor de Madariaga, was devoted to the question of disarmament, and the number of sub-committees which have sat from time to time is almost past computation.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

Further consideration is given in Chapters III, IV, and V to the prosecution of this, the first of the League's declared objects.

If machinery alone would have sufficed, the reduction of armaments would have taken place long ago.

ARBITRATION. These provisions are elaborate and would be excellent, given an honest desire on the part of the Members to refrain from war and use arbitration instead; or even an honest and courageous intention on the part of Members to call in the aid of the League for the settlement of any dispute between other Members. Article 11,<sup>1</sup> which should have been most valuable because it allows 'the friendly right' of any Member to appeal to the League when any dispute arises which 'threatens to disturb the peace of the world', in good time and before any aggression has taken place, has been very largely neglected, and when a Member has wished to invoke it, other Members have been known to discourage it from doing so. The causes of this disastrous neglect lie in the disloyal conception of their own sovereignty that great Powers have maintained, so that they have more than once, in breach of their own undertaking in Article 11, declared any intervention 'unfriendly'; in the very natural timidity of the weaker Powers,

<sup>1</sup> See Note 2, Chapter II.

## THE LETTER OF THE LAW

which has often prevented them from appealing against the great ones, and in the alliances which have made Members unwilling to bring before the League any dispute involving an ally. The great Powers (the Permanent Members of the Council), on whom, in the last resort, the League would have to rely for effective sanctions — these great Powers have too often selfishly stood in the way of using Article 11, one of the best provisions of the Covenant. How are we to suppose that Powers still at that stage of political development are fit to be trusted with the international use of armed force? Must we not also be convinced that the League has more than once been prevented from pronouncing a judgment lest such a judgment should lead to the corollary of sanctions, for which Members were not prepared?

Which are the great Powers and by what measure are they called great? By the measure of military strength. When the Covenant was drafted, it was hoped that the League would contain five Powers, great in this sense. They were the United States, Britain, France, Italy and Japan. By 1920 there were only four, the United States having withdrawn. Not till 1926, when Germany became a Member, were there five again, and of these, Germany, being still disarmed, was only potentially great. In 1933, by the resignations of Japan and Germany, the great Powers in the League were

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

reduced to three, with four great Powers (United States, Germany, Japan, and Russia) outside. In 1934 the balance was improved by the admission of Russia; but as Italy, though still a Member, has become the League's most flagrantly disloyal Member, we may say that, for League purposes, the situation is now three to four: in the League France, Britain, Russia; outside the League the United States, Japan, Italy and (speedily becoming great) Germany. It can be said that till 1933 the Permanent Members of the Council consisted of the Allies, with Germany from 1926 to 1933, while she was being artificially kept weak by the Treaty of Versailles. When Germany went out in order to make herself strong, Russia, after abusing the League for years as one of '*bourgeois* governments', came in with purposes not very clear, but, since her alliance with France, to be certainly reckoned in France's orbit, for the time being.

Article 11, although excellent, has been too frequently ignored. Yet unless early action is taken under Article 11, before any aggression has actually occurred, it is to be feared that bullying Powers may always have the advantage of time; and time is, in modern warfare, of ever-increasing importance. For instance, Italy was allowed to proceed unhindered and openly with her preparations for the conquest of Ethiopia for months before she attacked.

## THE LETTER OF THE LAW

It might have been possible to deflect Mussolini's purpose at an early stage, before he had discovered his strength and the League's weakness; but he was allowed to choose his hour and, when he made of a trifling squabble at Wal Wal the pretext for a war of conquest, he was fully prepared and committed, and it would have been impossible for him then to submit to the League without risking his whole position at home. A defeat of Mussolini would have been followed by a revolution. None of the great Powers cared to risk that.

The art of saving face is the first of the arts required for peaceful diplomacy; it is far more important than any number of pacts and pledges, which, as experience shows, may be broken under stress. The statesman's art lies in avoiding the stress. Many of the world's rulers still have the mentality of boys and anyone who has thought out how best to bring turbulent boys to admire and practise order and consideration for others knows more about 'collective security' and how to ensue it than the legalists who work out a complete system of pains and penalties which no one has the moral strength to impose.

It is difficult sometimes, when one listens to the complicated discussions of international lawyers on the Prevention of War, not to feel that really the whole thing is to them only a kind of beautifully

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

difficult crossword puzzle, instead of a problem involving the very lives of countless human beings and the peaceful organization of economic relations upon whose co-operative quality those lives depend; a problem requiring tact, good humour, the habit of give-and-take; a problem which involves the understanding of other people's needs and tempers; the understanding not only of reason but of unreason.

When the grosser forms of swindling and cruelty have been purged from diplomacy, there remain the more delicate and intelligent forms of the art of peace-making. The sort of diplomacy that is most successful in the making of peace is not the kind which hunts up the texts of treaties and, having collated the various interpretations and reservations, presents the petitioner with the result, saying, 'Here is the law. All you have to do is to obey it'. The law! The *petit bout de papier*, for instance (as that fine statesman, Léon Blum, called it), with which in 1923 M. Poincaré put the bailiffs into the Ruhr, thereby wrecking all hope of Franco-German understanding for a period whose limit is not yet in sight.

The method of the peace-maker is a much homelier procedure; one with which every successful works manager, every resourceful teacher, every cunning mother is familiar. Such homely diplomacy

## THE LETTER OF THE LAW

sees to it that mischiefs are not allowed to go too far. It meets grievances half-way, instead of waiting till the aggrieved explode. It uses all legitimate ingenuity in diverting attention from grievances and so preventing them from becoming obsessions and intractable. It does not stand upon prestige, or piffling points of honour. It yields a little — not too much — to man's boyish habit of swaggering and bragging and peacocking. Above all, it dares to go to its own people and ask them to be generous. It does not nurse that curious sense of honour which allows a diplomat to break an engagement he has made in the name of his country, but forbids him to forgo the slightest material advantage. Everybody must feel that it was a most unfortunate diplomacy which, for many years, refused generous or even just treatment to Germany and yet was compelled, later, to yield much that would have made a good atmosphere if it had been given with grace and from a cheerful giver. By the refusal of generosity, force has had a tremendous impetus.

There are individual persons who are moral imbeciles and of whom it may be said that they must be controlled by force. But there is no such thing as a criminal nation, and all nations are composed of people who are amenable to considerate treatment. It is not necessary to hate the peacock. We may, privately, smile at him, but it is good to



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

humour him in public. He may learn manners if we leave off scolding him and giving exaggerated importance to his tail-spreading. Much irritation would also be avoided if rulers would leave off applying the standards of their own countries to others whose conditions are quite different; if Herr Hitler would cease exhorting us to hate the Bolsheviks, and Mr. Eden would refrain from advising Herr Hitler to be a perfect little English gentleman.

In thus exalting a humble sort of diplomacy it is not intended to suggest that the world can dispense with Law; that the provisions for arbitration are not most valuable and that the extension of judicial, arbitral and conciliatory procedure is not of the first importance. Vague amiability does not solve the great and complex problems of modern life. Brain-work and organization are essential. But there have been two tendencies during the life of the League which have helped to stultify the advantages of having a code of law and a system of arbitration. One of these is the deliberate and often very skilful use of legal forms to defeat statesmanship and prevent the clearing up of real grievances. The other is the tendency of negotiators to get bogged in points of law and to spend such an immense amount of time unravelling the puzzles in which they have involved themselves that the

## THE LETTER OF THE LAW

living, passionate, eating, breeding and dying peoples have made their war, have burnt their witch, have even sometimes, strange to say, become reconciled, or have indulged in a change of partners, while Mr. Legality is still inquiring whether Article XIX, section 10, subsection *b* can be reconciled with an Amendment passed at the second Assembly but not yet ratified by the required majority, or with a ruling of the Court of International Justice.

Nevertheless some League enthusiasts have done no good to the cause of peace by insisting that the League must have a finger in every pie.<sup>1</sup> There have been leader-writers who lamented that, if Poland insisted perversely on coming to an agreement with Germany over Danzig, she made it very difficult for the League to maintain that Germany must be forced to abandon the agreement; others actually suggested, after the Saar plebiscite, that the League must 'look after its own' and establish a little enclave in the Saar territory to accommodate the 46,613 Saarlanders who had voted for the *status quo* (under the League) as against the 477,109 who had voted for the return of the Saar to Germany.

<sup>1</sup> The League has long been credited with having stopped the threatened Graeco-Bulgar war in 1925. It now appears (from a letter to *The Times* of March 19th, 1937, by M. Caclamanos, representing Greece in London in 1925) that the invasion was stopped by Sir Austen Chamberlain in the pre-war style, by private friendly advice and the warning that Greece's 'disinterested friends and protectors were too far from the spot to give an effective support'.

The League was useful later in consolidating an agreement.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

It really will not do for the League to be more Polish than the Poles or to attempt the establishment of another unprotectable protectorate.

Closely allied to the problems of arbitration are those of aggression and self-defence, which will be touched upon later, when that enormous scheme for the amendment of the Covenant, known as the Geneva Protocol of 1924, is mentioned. Here attention will be drawn only to the fact that (in Article 15, Section 7) there is an admission that, where arbitration has failed, 'the Members reserve to themselves the right to take such action as they shall consider necessary for the maintenance of right and justice'. The right, be it understood, each respectively to take such action, perhaps against fellow-Members; for this is the famous 'gap in the Covenant' which seems to permit Members to go to war under certain conditions. This gap was theoretically closed by the Pact of Paris, negotiated by America and France outside the League, and an effort was made by the British delegation at the Ninth Assembly to amend the Covenant in conformity with the Pact of Paris, so as to leave no gap by which war for national purposes could be tolerated by the League. These amendments have not been incorporated in the Covenant and it has been maintained, therefore, that it may not always be a breach of the Covenant (though it certainly

## THE LETTER OF THE LAW

would be a breach of the Pact of Paris) for a Member to resort to war for national purposes. This would be so, however, only if the Council refused to use its powers. For even after arbitration had failed, the Council could impose an armistice and a Member which ignored a League-imposed armistice would be guilty of aggression.

All this, however, is purely theoretical; for (quite apart from the fact that the development of air-warfare would make it exceedingly difficult for one only of two belligerents to cease fighting unless he were prepared to admit defeat) a League which has not won the confidence of its Members, to say nothing of the rest of the world, would only be making an empty gesture if it imposed an armistice, though it might still negotiate one at the request of both belligerents. Remembering the course of the various aggressions since 1920, one cannot resist the conviction that, to all the great Powers and to some of the more restless smaller Powers, the discussions about the gap have been academic; for never, during those years, have aggressions been preceded by serious efforts at arbitration, as prescribed in Article 15; all the wars that have occurred have been patently illegal and the guilty states have justified them by what are, in fact, pre-League arguments: that the situation was impossible, that intolerable insults had been suffered, that the aggressor would

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

civilize his victims, or simply that his need for expansion was his apology.

The more we study the elaborate provisions for Arbitration in Article 15, the more it is borne in upon us that they are applicable to great Powers only when these desire to have a question settled by arbitration rather than by force; if they do not, they are only too likely to rush the dilatory process by establishing a position which has always been found very difficult to turn: the accomplished fact. On the other hand, the League has found it easy to impose arbitration upon weak Powers, provided they are not under the protection of one of the great Powers. But this is not Law. It is just the old Power-Politics and an example of the methods of the old Concert of Europe.

It should be the purpose and hope of everyone to do all that is humanly possible to make the rulers of the world prefer settlement by arbitration and conciliation to settlement by force. By all sorts of economic adjustments, by discouraging the bullying of minorities, by refraining from describing every readjustment as a 'victory' for this politician, or that state, and by generous and public acknowledgment of concessions to the great cause of world-co-operation, every individual the world over could contribute something.

AGGRESSION AND SANCTIONS. Sanctions, the

## THE LETTER OF THE LAW

penalties for aggression, or 'resort to war', are implicit in Article 10, by which Members undertake 'to respect and *preserve* as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League'. In the word 'preserve', here italicized, lies the threat of ultimate force which is more fully developed in Articles 16 and 17<sup>1</sup>. No articles have been the subjects of more discussion and disagreement than the first two. What, for instance, is war? What provision is to be made for an occasion when the 'gap' occurs? How define the aggressor? Is it fair to require Powers whose territory happens to lie between that of two belligerents to permit the passage of troops over their territory? e.g. if Germany and Russia went to war, must Poland allow French and British troops passage over her territory? Must Belgium consent to be made once more a battlefield in a quarrel not her own?

When Germany was being urged to join the League in 1926, she put the case that Poland might be at war with Russia (which at that time did not seem unlikely); must Germany — part of whose territory was still occupied by French, Belgian and British troops, and where strong resentment against the occupation was felt by Germans — neverthe-

<sup>1</sup> For text of Article 16 see Note 3, Chapter II. Article 17 provides for the settlement of aggression by non-Members, but this has not been much discussed.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

less undertake to allow British, Belgian and French (especially French) troops to pass over her territory on their way to defend Poland (France's ally) against Russia (not yet France's ally)? The Locarno Powers, which were by that time anxious to get Germany into the League, took it upon themselves to soothe Germany's apprehensions and, quoting from the Protocol (which Britain had killed in 1925), assured her that the Assembly would consent that her obligations should be determined by her 'military and geographical position'.

Now this is common sense making irruption into legalism. Law ought not to require the impossible, or even the next-to-impossible. But if you once begin to ease the obligation to contribute to a compulsory system of sanctions, you put the sanctionists at a dangerous disadvantage as compared with the united and perhaps totalitarian aggressor, and you offer great temptation to the shirker and the seceder. The Protocol was a desperate effort to define the obligations of sanctions so exactly that it would be impossible to evade them, but even the Protocol had to ease the situation in the manner quoted by the Locarno Powers.

The whole edifice of sanctions is built upon the monstrous hypothesis that facts are always obtainable at short notice; real facts, upon which a quasi-judicial judgment can be given and the most

## THE LETTER OF THE LAW

appalling penalty exacted. In every war, every government has declared itself the injured party; yet it has not been unknown that responsible rulers have later declared, 'We put our money on the wrong horse'. That, it is assumed, is a thing of the past and the Council will always know where to apportion the blame. The infallibility of Members almost rivals that of the Pope.

In Article 16 the Members undertake *immediately* to subject the aggressor to certain drastic penalties, diplomatic, social and economic. This provision has, however, been greatly modified by a series of interpretations, in order to facilitate negotiation and minimize loss and inconvenience to Members upon whom, clearly, the obligations must fall very unevenly. A general diplomatic boycott of the aggressor would be an expression of disapproval, but it would not be likely to affect seriously a determined aggressor. It was not attempted in even such flagrant cases as those in Manchuria and Ethiopia. It seemed that France and Britain were even zealous in assuring Italy that we all remained the best of friends. This was going rather far and was in ludicrous contrast with the embargoes laid by the Members upon trade with the aggressor, relatively trifling as these were. They reversed Shylock's declaration that he would trade with Christians, but not dine with them.



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

In spite of all the modifications and reservations made by the Council to the application of economic sanctions, it might yet be theoretically possible to apply them, given time. But time is one of the conditions not offered in modern war, and before the cumbrous machinery of sanctions can become efficacious the war is over and the League is presented with the accomplished fact, in face of which the great Powers would have to show qualities of which there has as yet been no sign. Convinced sanctionists are now, therefore, urging that there shall be contrived and pigeon-holed for immediate use when required, a pre-arranged scheme of economic sanctions which could be put into force anywhere by merely notifying Members, by wireless or telephone, that aggression had been recorded and that the League expected every Member to do its duty. It is averred that a 'metal sanction', i.e. an embargo on the export to the aggressor of certain metals necessary for armaments, but not possessed by the aggressor, would speedily finish the process begun by an embargo on the export of arms. Another proposal is to place an embargo on the export of oil.

There are commodities the refusal of which to countries not possessing them would undoubtedly stop those countries from prosecuting a war. They would vary with every country and all such

## THE LETTER OF THE LAW

embargoes would depend upon the co-operation not only of Members but of all exporting states. When there was a talk of stopping supplies of oil to Italy in the recent war, the United States gave it to be understood that, although it would not protect its nationals if they chose to risk sending oil to Italy, neither would it put an embargo on the export of oil; so that the sanctionist states were faced with the alternative of capturing American trading vessels, or of allowing the importation of oil by Italy from America.

There might be several states sufficiently self-supporting to be able to risk a complete economic boycott and the threat of one is certainly a very strong inducement to states that have no confidence in the League to make themselves, at a pinch, economically independent of the rest of the world. They would have to be very extensive pigeon-holes which would suffice to contain all the permutations and combinations in situations which might call for the application of economic sanctions against any aggressor by all the rest. Experience leads one to anticipate that one or two sets of pigeon-holes would be crammed to overflowing and the rest would be left empty. The Society which calls itself 'The Friends of Europe' would probably consider that one set of pigeon-holes would suffice; but that would be an extensive set.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

One advantage that economic sanctions were supposed to have over military sanctions was that they could be applied gradually and that the gentle turning of the economic screw would convince the aggressor that his crime was bad business and would stop him before much harm was done. The conquest of Ethiopia was a demonstration of the fact that the slow-working economic screw may only drive a determined aggressor to use immediately the most terrorist methods in his power, so as to get a swift decision before the screw should pinch him too hard. The Ethiopian case was really in some ways very favourable for the success of League sanctions, because of Italy's lack of many essential products, which she must import. Italy's success in defying the League was due not to her power of conquering by force of arms the formidable array of sanctionist states, but to the utter unwillingness of some of the most powerful among these to let loose on Europe a war which would almost certainly have become a European war.

We frequently see references to a possible 'League war'. Nowhere in the Covenant is it prescribed that there shall be a League war (though in the Treaties of Mutual Assistance which occupied so much of the League's time up to 1924 it was actually proposed that the Council should conduct war); the phrase is merely a short way of denoting a situation

## THE LETTER OF THE LAW

which might very likely result from a strict application of Article 16. If military, naval and air sanctions were decided upon, and the Balance of Power were not obviously on the side of the Members who consented to contribute forces, a situation sufficiently resembling war (between the League on the one hand and the aggressor or aggressors on the other) would result to justify the popular use of the phrase, and in that sense it will be used here.

The Council has power only to 'recommend', not to enforce contributions to the League army, but it is impossible to conceive of a composite force of this kind as differing substantially from an old-fashioned force of Allies. Theirs would be a desperate war and all required measures for unity and dispatch would have to be taken. And the fighting, too, would have to be all-in. Too many popular lecturers have simplified the issues to such an extent as gravely to misrepresent them. Taking for granted the loyalty of Members, they have drawn a seductive picture of one aggressor, confronted by the massed power of over fifty states, either abandoning his evil project without a blow, or being speedily brought to his senses by the armed conscience of the League. 'There would be no war if all the Members were united,' say these propagandists. There is much virtue in that little word 'if'.

It is very unlikely that such a war would be carried

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

on for long against only one aggressor, nor is it likely that the initial aggression, the ostensible motive for sanctions, would be long remembered, nor that every Member would maintain an attitude of altruism when there were fish to be caught in the troubled waters. How long did it take us in 1914 to forget the murder of the Austrian heir-apparent in a conspiracy hatched by a neighbouring government? Did Tsarist Russia fight for 'gallant little Belgium'? What interest had Italy in the liberation of small nationalities?

It is not argued here that a League war is impossible. If it were, the danger would not be so great. What is to be feared is that certain Powers, desiring war for their own purposes, might find sanctions useful, and contrive them as a cover for such a war. Ideals *are* useful when you are addressing 'the common people', who are apt to be strangely idealistic. It is not possible yet to record a very marked change of heart in diplomacy since the Covenant was supposed to supersede Secret Treaties, but diplomats would certainly find the idealism of League language a valuable adjunct to their nationalist policies.

### NOTES

1. *Preamble to the Covenant of the League of Nations.*

The High Contracting Parties, in order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security

## THE LETTER OF THE LAW

by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war,  
by the prescription of open, just and honourable relations  
between nations,  
by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among Governments, and  
by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another,  
Agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations.

### 2. *Article 11.*

1. Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the Members of the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations. In case any such emergency should arise the Secretary General shall on the request of any Member of the League forthwith summon a meeting of the Council.

It is also declared to be the friendly right of each Member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or of the Council any circumstance whether affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends.

### 3. *Article 16.*

1. Should any Member of the League resort to war in disregard of its covenants under Articles 12, 13, or 15, it shall *ipso facto* be deemed to have committed an act of war against all other Members of the League which hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant-breaking State, and the prevention of all financial, commercial or personal intercourse between the nationals of the covenant-breaking State and the nationals of any other State, whether a Member of the League or not.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

2. It shall be the duty of the Council in such case to recommend to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force the Members of the League shall severally contribute to the forces to be used to protect the covenants of the League.

3. The Members of the League agree, further, that they will mutually support one another in the financial and economic measures which are taken under this Article, in order to minimize the loss and inconvenience resulting from the above measures, and that they will mutually support one another in resisting any special measures aimed at one of their number by the covenant-breaking State, and that they will take the necessary steps to afford passage through their territory to the forces of any Members of the League which are co-operating to protect the covenants of the League.

4. Any Member of the League which has violated any covenant of the League may be declared to be no longer a Member of the League by a vote of the Council concurred in by the Representatives of all the other Members of the League represented thereon.

### CHAPTER III

## THE LAW AND THE OUTLAW

The outlawry of Germany — Proposed trial of Wilhelm II and Holland's reply — Reparation Commission and its rights — No appeal — Ruhr invasion was legal — Germany taught again the lesson of militarism — Disarmament of Germany accomplished by the victors — Disarmament of the victors promised by them but not yet accomplished by the League — Texts of the various promises — 'Astronomical figures' of the indemnity — Imputation of 'War Guilt' and acceptance of it forced upon Germany — How 'the Lie' rankled — Effects of Germany's seven years' exclusion from the League — We now see what we foresaw — The Covenant must be independent of the Treaties

Now, having established what they intended to be a world-wide law to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security, the victors in the war did a very strange thing: they deliberately outlawed the very people whose warlike propensities they most feared, and who were most anxious to be included in 'the comity of nations'; a phrase we have often, since the rise of Naziism, read in English papers exhorting Germany to return to the League from which she was so long excluded.<sup>1</sup> In 1919 the victors not only refused to

<sup>1</sup> Austria and Bulgaria were admitted in 1920; Hungary in 1922; Germany in 1926.



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

consider her admission, but in the Treaty of Versailles they constituted themselves a law unto themselves and denied to their vanquished foe any access to the law and arbitration which they were setting up.

Two provisions of that Treaty will be cited here as showing the degree of legality with which the Allied and Associated Powers were at that time disposed to treat Germany.

*In Article 227,*

‘the Allied and Associated Powers publicly arraign William II of Hohenzollern, formerly German Emperor, for a supreme offence against international morality and the sanctity of treaties’.

Having constituted themselves the plaintiffs, the Allied and Associated Powers also constituted themselves the tribunal and the executioner: they declared it to be the duty of this tribunal

‘to fix the punishment which it considers should be imposed’.

So the defendant was already condemned before he had been tried. To the German plea, in reply, that,

‘If a violation of the law is to be atoned for, the proceedings themselves must be legal’,

## THE LAW AND THE OUTLAW

and the request that the case should be brought before

‘an international tribunal composed of neutrals’,  
the victors replied,

‘They cannot entertain the proposal to admit to the tribunal the representatives of countries which have taken no part in the war.’

Then, to avoid the inconvenient jurists who still could not reconcile it with the principle of impartiality that the plaintiffs should be sole judges and executioners, the victors declared,

‘Finally they wish to make it clear that the public arraignment under Article 227 framed against the German ex-Emperor has not a juridical character as regards its substance but only in its form.’

That is to say the ex-Emperor was to be tried by legal methods for offences not known to law; and even that was not true, for the methods proposed were not legal, the judges being themselves interested in the case.

Fortunately the victors were saved from the consequences of this *gaffe*, which, if they could have got hold of Wilhelm II in their existing mood, might have resulted in a trial that would have

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

rivalled the Reichstag-fire trial, or the best-staged effort of the U.S.S.R. The ex-Emperor was in Holland and the victors were obliged to

‘address a request to the Government of the Netherlands for the surrender to them of the ex-Emperor in order that he may be put on trial;’

and the Dutch, being first-class jurists — none better — declared that they could not consent to the extradition of the ex-Emperor, which would, in their opinion, be illegal. So the matter had perforce to be dropped and is of importance chiefly as showing the state of mind of the victors, contrasted with that of a highly civilized and legally learned Neutral, and as providing a striking example of the reasons for a general lack of confidence in the impartiality of Powers who made a body of law and then proposed to be plaintiff, judge and executioner in the case of alleged crimes not known to law.

The other example to be cited is of much greater importance, because it had far-reaching effects for many years on the relations between victors and vanquished, on the economic condition of the whole world and on the efficiency of the young League. Having imposed vast but indefinite indemnity (called Reparations) upon Germany, the victors formed a Reparation Commission representing only

## THE LAW AND THE OUTLAW

the victors, whose proceedings were to be private,

‘unless, on particular occasions, the Commission shall otherwise determine for special reasons,’

and

‘the Commission shall not be bound by any particular code or rules of law or by any particular rule of evidence or of procedure but shall be guided by justice, equity, and good faith.’  
(Annex ii, Part viii.)

In complete privacy, therefore, the victors, completely self-absolved from codes of law and rules of evidence or of procedure, were themselves to be sole arbiters of what constituted justice, equity and good faith. Further on in the same Annex it was laid down that

‘The measures which the Allied and Associated Powers shall have the right to take, in case of voluntary default by Germany and *which Germany agrees not to regard as acts of war*, may include economic and financial prohibitions and reprisals *and in general such other measures as the respective Governments may determine to be necessary in the circumstances.*’ [Italics mine.]

It will be seen that this article ruled out all appeal to the League or even to the Hague Court and made

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

the victors sole arbiters as to whether any default were voluntary and as to the nature of the measures which the respective Governments might, at their good pleasure, decide to be necessary; even if these measures involved actual invasion with horse, foot, aircraft, and artillery of the most modern patterns. To the puzzling riddle 'When is war not war?' the answer was 'When it accords with an Article of the Treaty of Versailles'.

Upon this article the French based their claim to legality in their invasion of the Ruhr in 1923, a claim denied by the British Law officers of the Crown at the time, although the British Government actually facilitated the passage of French and Belgian troops through the Cologne area, in British occupation. Once a treaty has been signed and ratified by all the parties to it, even if it has been imposed under duress, it becomes law, and action in accordance with it becomes legal. Germany was, in all that concerned Reparations, outlawed by the Treaty of Versailles and any action in accordance with that treaty was legal. It is difficult to see, in view of the inclusion of the word 'respective', how the action of France and Belgium could be held to contravene the treaty, even if Britain disapproved the action, as she did. M. Léon Blum who, at the time, courageously protested (with M. Jouhaux and M. Paul-Boncour) against this use of M. Poincaré's

## THE LAW AND THE OUTLAW

*petit bout de papier*, did so not on the ground that it was illegal, but that such a use violated equity, prudence and humanity. If, in prosecuting legal rights that have been acquired by duress, suffering is imposed out of all proportion to the ostensible objects, while hatred and revenge are generated and military force is exalted as the ultimate appeal, such action may be legal, but it is in the highest degree unstatesmanlike; for it is likely to engender in the minds of the victims a distrust very difficult subsequently to overcome. We certainly helped to build up Germany's aversion from arbitration.

Germany, then, was the outlaw. Her conquerors were to be, for six years, her judges according to no fixed code. She was forcibly excluded from the 'comity of nations', until, in 1924, with the arrival into office of M. Herriot in France and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in Britain, some modifications were made in the cruel and short-sighted Reparation system which not only ruined Germany, but dislocated the finance and the trade and the tariffs of the whole world. Not till 1926 was Germany admitted to the League and even then the victors had not the foresight to get some credit for themselves by finally abolishing Reparation — this Old Man of the Sea that all the world wanted to shake off — but forced upon Dr. Brüning a final repudiation in 1932. What might have been an act of

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

statesmanship, if initiated by the victors, benefiting them as much as Germany, was converted by them into the first of several unilateral denunciations of the Treaty of Versailles by Germany. Reparations, ostensibly devised for the rebuilding of a war-devastated world, were converted into the chief obstacle to economic recovery, and Germany, which at last blew up that obstacle, was reproached with breaking the law which never ought to have been made and which every country by that time wanted broken. The situation was subsequently regularized at Lausanne.

The 'Dawes Plan' of 1924 did not bring in useful reparation; some people even thought that it was not intended to do so; but it was useful because it brought the French out of the Ruhr and introduced the first beginnings of arbitral procedure to take the place of the Sword of Brennus which the victors had thrown into the scale. The 'Young Plan' of 1929 never got going effectually and it became obvious that, if Reparations were not abolished legally, they would be abolished illegally.

What a contribution it would have been to the 'international co-operation' so solemnly declared in the Preamble of the Covenant to be one of the League's prime objects, if in 1926 (when with equal solemnity the victors announced that the 'Locarno spirit' was one of friendship with Germany)

## THE LAW AND THE OUTLAW

an Economic Commission of the League had been given the task of contriving, in co-operation with debtors and creditors, to settle up international indebtedness, at least so far as Europe was concerned!

The first pages of the Sibylline books had been torn out after the Great Refusal of 1919; subsequent offers were rejected in the same way, and each time the proffered treasure, Security based on Confidence, became less and less.

In Austria and Hungary and Bulgaria the devastation caused by the territorial changes in the respective treaties was so great that Reparation was not exacted in the same way, and the League's Economic Section had to be called in to patch up some of the worst results of victory. But in Germany, the existence of the Reparation Commission and the power which it gave to French intrigue for the disruption of Germany built up for many years a distrust and a sense of wrong which will be lived down only by years of patient international effort. It is easy for us to forget the invasion of the Ruhr and the long occupation of the Rhineland. Probably very few people here realized what must be the economic, still less what must be the psychic consequences. These consequences were to be felt very largely in the development of the younger generation, and those of us who most detest certain



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

brutal and narrowly national tendencies in the Nazis should always remind ourselves that these are the young who grew up during the post-war years and who re-learnt then the lesson of militarism: if you are not strong enough to bully others, they will bully you. A deplorable lesson, but one which the victors certainly did their best to rub in.

Four years after the armistice — years of humiliation, semi-starvation, isolation and outlawry — Germans saw themselves invaded still further by fully armed forces, and still under the treaty obligation not to regard the invasion as an act of war. They saw the strangle-hold on the German heavy industries that remained after the great confiscations in Alsace, Lorraine, Silesia and the Saar territory. They saw the crippling of the Ruhr railway system and of scientifically delicate machinery by the ignorant invader; the persistent French efforts to rally disloyal and criminal portions of German people to the Separatist movement<sup>1</sup> so as to set up '*La Rhénanie*' as a buffer state and even proceed to detach Saxony and Bavaria by specious offers of concessions in the matter of Reparations. Above all, among the 'common people' (those whom the French more courteously call '*le petit peuple*'), there was the inevitable loathing growing up for

<sup>1</sup> See *The Revolver Republic*, by G. E. R. Gedye, and *The Dariac Report* (*Manchester Guardian*, November 2nd, 1922, and March 5th, 1923).

## THE LAW AND THE OUTLAW

the jack-boot invader, billeted in their humble homes, installing his brothels in many townships hitherto free from these centres of infection, wandering about sometimes (like Lieutenant Rouzier) with a switch for anyone who did not get quickly enough into the gutter when he passed, or, when very drunk, with a revolver for some harmless group gossiping at a corner. Most resented were perhaps the African soldiers who undoubtedly helped to start the racial megalomania which is so absurd and yet so dangerous an element in the psychosis of modern Germany. All these plots and impositions certainly contributed to the spy-mania which is at the root of so much Nazi — as of Fascist and Soviet — cruelty.

All this and much more, while at Geneva there sat an international organization with its laws and admirable machinery for arbitration and co-operation, rendered powerless to modify a single folly or judge a single crime perpetrated against the outlaw.

Turning from Reparations to Disarmament we see that the disarmament of Germany was supervised by an Inter-Allied Commission. The German fleet *was* destroyed; German military aviation *was* abolished; Conscription in Germany *was* prohibited; even the Inter-Allied Commission certified at one time that Germany's army (for a population of

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

nearly seventy millions) did not exceed the 100,000 long-service volunteers permitted by the Treaty. For years Inter-Allied Commissions of many sorts<sup>1</sup> trampled over Europe, settling matters to their liking, while the great new body at Geneva was estopped from offering its mediatory services.

It is certain that, given the nature of the Treaties, most of the administration of them was inevitably withdrawn from the League. It would have been impossible to get some of the Neutrals in the war to consent to much that would have been insisted on by the victors, and the League would have been disrupted almost before it started. That is only another confirmation of the fact that confidence in the League was undermined at its foundation by the Peace Treaties and the way in which they were administered.

The disarmament of the Members of the League was entrusted to the various bodies set up by the League and we all know what progress they have made in the course of seventeen years. Was there then no legal obligation whatever upon the victors to pursue a policy of disarmament parallel with that which they enforced on Germany? No, there has never been any legal obligation to disarm;

<sup>1</sup> Among these were the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission, the Reparations Commission, the Mixed Arbitral Tribunal; many matters of interest to the whole world were arbitrarily settled by the Council of Ambassadors.

no obligation that could be legally enforced; and even if there had been, who was there to enforce such an obligation? There was an obligation of honour, undertaken repeatedly. It has been said that a debt of honour is so-called precisely because the most precious possession a man has, his honour, rather than any material forfeit, is engaged in its fulfilment. Well, here are a few quotations from the promises made by the victors when they imposed, and carried out, disarmament of the vanquished:

ARTICLE 8 OF THE COVENANT begins:

‘The Members of the League recognize that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations.

‘The Council, taking account of the geographical situation and circumstances of each State, shall formulate plans for such reduction for the consideration and action of the several Governments.

‘Such plans shall be subject to reconsideration and revision at least every ten years.

‘After these plans shall have been adopted by the several Governments, the limits of armaments therein fixed shall not be exceeded without the concurrence of the Council.’

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

Very neat and pretty. But in seventeen years the Council has never got so far as even to formulate a plan of disarmament, though there have been Russian, American and British plans, all doomed to destruction. On the occasion of the admission of Germany to the League at the Seventh Assembly (1926) M. Briand made one of his most intoxicating orations. Waving his hands to the astonished delegation from disarmed Germany, he, the representative of fully-armed France, thundered '*Arrière les canons! Arrière les mitrailleuses!*' and was received, as he always was at Geneva, with almost hysterical applause. The rhetorician, Glendower, may boast 'I can call spirits from the vasty deep!' But prosaic Hotspur replies, 'Why so can I, and so can any man; but will they come when you do call?'

PART V OF THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES begins:

'In order to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of the armaments of all nations, Germany undertakes strictly to observe the military, naval and air clauses which follow.'

These are the clauses, the fulfilment of which was supervised and enforced by Inter-Allied Commissions, but no great Power has been found to carry out the promise implied in the first phrase.

IN THE REPLY OF THE ALLIED AND ASSOCIATED POWERS TO THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE GERMAN

## THE LAW AND THE OUTLAW

DELEGATION on the Conditions of Peace, the following passage occurs (Part I, iv):

‘The Allied and Associated Powers . . . recognize that the acceptance by Germany of the terms laid down for her own disarmament will facilitate and hasten the accomplishment of a general reduction of armaments; and they intend to open negotiations immediately with a view to the eventual adoption of a scheme of such general reduction. It goes without saying that the realization of this programme will depend in large part on the satisfactory carrying out by Germany of her own engagements.’

In a further passage of this Reply (Part V, 1)

‘The Allied and Associated Powers wish to make it clear that their requirements in regard to German armaments were not made solely with the object of rendering it impossible for Germany to resume her policy of military aggression. They are also the first steps towards that general reduction and limitation of armaments which they seek to bring about as one of the most fruitful preventives of war, and which it will be one of the first duties of the League of Nations to promote.’

IN THE TEXT OF THE TREATY OF LOCARNO (OCTOBER 1925) we read the following words:

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

‘The representatives of the Governments represented here declare their firm conviction that the entry into force of these treaties and conventions will . . . hasten on effectively the disarmament provided for in Article 8 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. They undertake to give their sincere co-operation to the work relating to disarmament already undertaken by the League of Nations and to seek the realization thereof in a general agreement.’

The reference to Article 8 of the Covenant of the League, of which Germany was not yet a Member, and the fact that at that time Germany was disarmed relatively to the other Powers, show that the undertaking to ‘seek the realization’ of disarmament referred to France, Britain, Italy, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Belgium, who were co-signatories of the Locarno agreements with Germany.

The imputation of War Guilt was the justification given by the Allies for imposing an indemnity beyond any the world had ever seen. The indemnity imposed on France by Germany in 1870 was one of five milliards of francs (roughly 200 millions sterling). Germany in 1919 declared that she would make a great effort to pay 2,000 millions sterling and Mr. Maynard Keynes put this as a possible

## THE LAW AND THE OUTLAW

figure under favourable conditions.<sup>1</sup> But the Allies refused to name any total figure, and, after enumerating a huge mass of contributions that had to be handed over in cash and kind, besides the German territory, ships, colonies and coalfields taken from her, left the balance vague enough to allow of the turn of the screw if ever Germany should show signs of recovery. As, on the contrary, her economic condition grew from bad to worse, repeated defaults had to be condoned by repeated conferences, and it was one of Mr. Lloyd George's quasi-religious exercises to congratulate himself and his Allies on their generosity in not taking what was not there.

The justification for all this was embodied in the notorious ARTICLE 231 OF THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES, which runs:

‘The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of

<sup>1</sup> As showing the frivolous state of mind that prevailed at the time in dealing with these ‘astronomical figures’, Mr. Keynes reminds us that Mr. Lloyd George on December 11th, 1918, ‘laid down four principles to govern his Indemnity Policy, of which the chief were: First, we have an absolute right to demand the whole cost of the war; second, we propose to demand the whole cost of the war; and third, a Committee appointed by direction of the Cabinet believe that it can be done.’ In a footnote he explains further, ‘The whole cost of the war has been estimated at from £24,000 million upwards. This would mean an annual payment for interest (apart from sinking fund) of £1,200 millions. Could any expert Committee have reported that Germany can pay this sum?’ *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, p. 132.

Well, no, hardly. But the egregious M. Klotz in Paris was capable of anything.



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allies and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies.’<sup>1</sup>

In their reply, the German Government admitted the wrong committed by the invasion of Belgium and declared their willingness fully to indemnify Belgium. In regard to further responsibility for the war and for wrongs committed during the war, they asked for an impartial international tribunal. Then and ever after, Germans repudiated what they called the ‘War-guilt Lie’ and declared that if they were forced to sign an acceptance of this sort they would still believe and declare it to be a lie. Of late years it has become the fashion, perhaps as a result of the numerous investigations into the origins of the war, to deny that the victors imputed ‘War-guilt’ to Germany. It has been suggested that this article only means that Germany accepts responsibility so far as reparation is concerned. But there was not at the time any question in any of the Allied countries that the article did impute ‘War-guilt’, and the Allied reply to Germany’s protest makes it

<sup>1</sup> The words ‘allied’ and ‘allies’ are here printed as they are in the English text of the Treaty: capitals for the victors, small letters for the vanquished.

## THE LAW AND THE OUTLAW

quite clear that it was intended to do so, for that very rhetorical document declared categorically:

‘Germany has been the principal mainstay of autocracy in Europe [strange that it should forget such a bulwark of autocracy as Tsarist Russia, our ally!]. And in the end, seeing that she could attain her objects in no other way, *she planned and started the war* which caused the massacre and mutilation of millions and the ravaging of Europe from end to end.’ [Italics mine.]

It is a curious fact that Powers which glorify war, honour soldiers above all, boast in their histories of their past conquests — and which great Power does not? — are yet sensitive to the accusation of being the aggressor and devise always some excuse by which it would appear that they were not really aggressors. Whether by phrases such as ‘Girls in the gold-reef city’, or ‘the Russian steam-roller’, or ‘We don’t want to fight’, they put their heads in the pacifist bag for which they profess so much contempt.

Thus Germans resented the accusation of what they curiously called ‘War-Guilt’, but they resented still more being forced<sup>1</sup> to sign what they held to be

<sup>1</sup> There can be no doubt about the duress under which the Treaty was signed. Mr. Lloyd George (Vol. vi, p. 3318 of his *War Memories*) described how in 1919 the Allies arranged for ‘carrying out heavy bombing operations’ [against Germany if she refused to sign] ‘*by means of aerodromes set up in Bohemia*’ [i.e. Czechoslovakia]. Perhaps this may partly account for Herr Hitler’s Czechoslovakian complex.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

the acceptance of a lie. We ought to understand that and repair our error. Such reparation need not involve changing any opinion we ourselves may hold as to the relative responsibilities for the war. Germany does not require us to sign an acceptance of her innocence. We are at liberty to go on thinking her the villain of the piece if we can. All we need do is to declare that we do not hold *her* to the declaration we forced upon her in 1919. This would have an appeasing effect which we may find difficult to understand. But, for good and for ill, the German people are highly idealistic and they are hypersensitive and vehement in their feelings and emotions beyond anything which the less touchy Englishman has yet grasped. It is not helpful to ejaculate breezily 'Oh, let them get on with it! We are sick of their tantrums'. Some cultivated and sympathetic French men and women, led by Victor Margueritte, issued in July 1925 an *Appel aux Consciences*<sup>1</sup> which had its counterpart in this country, but was, in its turn, too realist to be understood by politicians. This appeal was from non-politicians for a declaration by the Governments of France and Britain on the lines suggested above. Nothing came of it except perhaps an intenser realization of the gap there seems to be between diplomacy and real life.

<sup>1</sup> See Note, Chapter III.

## THE LAW AND THE OUTLAW

Perhaps some young Englishman may protest: 'What is all the fuss about? Nobody bothers now about war-guilt!' Is that indeed true? Only in January of this year Mr. Eden was still saying that Germany's invasion of Belgium was the *cause* of the war, whereas it was one of the first *consequences* of the war already determined on. Even if it were true that no one ever now refers to War-guilt, the whole fabric of Reparations was built on Germany's acceptance of responsibility for aggression. 'Well, but', pursues our young man, 'Reparations have gone the way of all other war-junk; so again, why fuss?'

So easy is it to forget the griefs — of others!<sup>1</sup>

If Germany's view of the League was to be necessarily coloured by what the League did not do, was not allowed by the great Powers to do, there remained certain penal clauses of the Treaty, for the imposition of which the League had not the slightest responsibility, but which were handed over to be administered by the League. Such were the partition of Silesia, the administration of the Saar territory (which, during its first years, was in effect, French administration, and oppressive at that), the

<sup>1</sup> These pages were written the very day before Herr Hitler's speech to the Reichstag on January 30th, 1937, the fourth anniversary of his coming into power. In the course of this speech he is reported to have said, 'I solemnly withdraw, *above all*, the German signature from that declaration which was forced from a weak Government against its better judgment — that Germany was responsible for the war.' Here is proof of how that shameful Article has rankled.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

system in what was ironically called 'the free city of Danzig'. Certainly these and other measures were more justly carried out by the League than they would have been if they had been left to some of the Allies. But it is always probable that some of the indignation against a law will be carried over to those who administer that law. We see it daily in national life, when the police are beaten by rioters because these resent an unpopular law. Psychology is the study of what *is*, not the study of *what ought to be*, or of *what one would wish to be*. Once this is grasped, it is easy to see that many non-reasonable emotions contribute to form deep convictions, deep prejudices if you will.

Confidence is a state of mind very difficult to establish after a war. We frequently hear it said that Germany has not 'earned our confidence'. No. But have we earned hers? When, for seven years we refused Germany admission to the League, did we not contribute to the feeling, so unhappily popular in Germany now, that Germans can dispense with 'the comity of nations'? Is there not a slight aroma of Mr. Chadband about this phrase in the mouth of any national of the Allied Powers? Germany was a Member of the League for seven years, but she had been excluded for seven years previously. Now she has herself walked out, under circumstances to be discussed later.

## THE LAW AND THE OUTLAW

It is necessary to get Germany back into the League. How? We must not suppose that this can be done by material concessions only. Moreover, many of the changes that have pressed hard on Germany in the past cannot be restored in a hurry and some cannot be restored at all without war. Certainly her economic needs should have due consideration with those of others. Certainly, now that she has herself taken, in practice, the equality which was conceded 'in principle' at the Disarmament Conference in December 1932, it ought to be possible to follow up a political understanding with an all-round reduction in armaments. (In this connection it may be noted that M. Blum said soon after he came into power in 1936 that 'next to Russia', France was the most highly armed Power in Europe.)

It will take years to win the complete confidence of Germany — an invalid to be nursed back to health. This is a conception, by the way, that would be very distasteful to Germans themselves and tact is of prime importance. What little He-Man ever did like to be seen for what he is — pathetic?

But without the confidence of the world the League cannot usefully live. That confidence can be won; it cannot be commanded. It can never be won by putting any nation outside the law. Nor can it be supposed that outlawry ever had or ever

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

can have a good effect. The impatience of many progressive people in this country with the less reputable developments of Naziism (although they themselves foretold that the Treaty of Versailles and its administration were 'sowing the seeds of future wars') is regrettable. We are now seeing what we foresaw. Can we not have the patience to help in removing some of the causes of that woeful sight? We may think the Nazi doctrine of racialism unscientific and absurd; but that is the sort of doctrine that arises in a state of outlawry and it will take some years for a saner view to replace it. We are horrified and disgusted by the persecution of German Jewry. The causes of anti-Semitism are many and some of them operate in many countries besides Germany; in Rumania, Poland, Palestine, etc.; but one very powerful cause is the urge to find a scapegoat for disaster and wrong. Let us remove as much of the wrong as we can.

The linking up of the Peace Treaties with the Covenant of the League, which constitutes the first 26 Articles, was a blunder which has been realized, in this country at least, for many years. When the Covenant has to be recast, as, after the collapse of sanctions in 1936, it must be, there should be no difficulty in devising a form of words by which it will be made clear that it stands on its own feet, as devised and consented to by all its Members.

## THE LAW AND THE OUTLAW

### NOTE

The translation of parts of the French *Appel aux Consciences* published in *L'Ere Nouvelle*, July 9th, 1925, is as follows:

‘A mere misunderstanding separates the world from peace. It perpetuates between the former belligerents, and particularly between France and Germany, that war-spirit which inevitably arises from the consciousness of injustice leading to the instinct for a war of revenge.’

After quoting the Treaty it proceeds:

‘What she [Germany] cannot accept is that an admission was *forcibly* torn from her against which, *both before and after her signature*, she has never ceased to protest, and in which she believes her unilateral fault in originating the war, and her consequent responsibility for it are proclaimed to the world . . . Article 231 was extorted from Germany only by violence and under the threat of immediately resuming the war until Germany should be utterly ruined. Can we — after declaring that we waged a war of Law against Force — give the force of Law to a proceeding so unworthy of civilization? The time for summary jurisdiction without appeal has gone by. It is as iniquitous to condemn, undefended, a people to dishonour as an individual to death . . . We are at the cross-roads. We must choose. On the one hand, all the evils of war, perpetuated by the spirit of revenge. On the other hand, genuine reconciliation and fertile labour. We invite all those whose home is a place of mourning, all those whose hearts retain the love of justice and truth, all those whose aim in life is to create a world free from war for their sons, to join their prayer to ours. Let not German nationalism mistake us. This is no proof of weakness. It is an instance of French rectitude, a step towards human solidarity.’





## CHAPTER IV

# THE HOUSE OF CARDS

France's demand for Security — Draft Treaties of Mutual Assistance — The Jekyll and Hyde Resolutions — Insecurity in Europe — Military criticisms of the Treaties — Changes of Government — The Dawes Plan — the Geneva Protocol — Talk of Germany's admission — Pre-arranged plans — Definition of aggression — Rejection of Protocol — Stresemann's offer — Difficulties of Sanctions Clauses — Treaty of Locarno — A common treaty — Did it give security? — Did it result in disarmament? — The Extraordinary Assembly — A game of poker and a tea-fight — Sweden to the rescue — Germany sent home — Allied Army of Occupation remained in Rhineland — Preparatory Disarmament Commission began — Germany admitted to the League

THE DRAFT TREATIES OF MUTUAL ASSISTANCE. In spite of the complete though temporary crushing of Germany and the scattering of the Austro-Hungarian Empire among seven states (perhaps, indeed, because of these acts rather than in spite of them) France remained dissatisfied on the subject of her Security, menaced, as she believed, by the collapse of the tripartite Treaty of Guarantee with America and Britain. The general guarantee of the Covenant did not satisfy her, and while she was contracting a number of alliances with Belgium, Poland and the Little Entente, her representatives always urged, at

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

sessions of the various disarmament commissions, the necessity of undertakings more explicit and binding, before they would consent to the holding of a disarmament conference. France never had any confidence in the Security provided by the existing Covenant, nor the least appreciation of the fact that it was her treatment of Germany, more than anything else, which menaced her Security.

Security, in her opinion — and a very tenacious opinion it has been — could be attained only by the possession of preponderant military force, available at short notice. Germany was still the only Power to be feared, and France was determined to run no risk of her ever becoming preponderant again. If the various promises of disarmament to which reference was made in Chapter III were to be fulfilled, and France, with others, was to undertake reduction of armaments, it should be only on the condition that absolute Security was assured to her. From that time to this, stress has been laid on this conception of Security, and up to 1924 it held the field to the exclusion of any other consideration. For Poincaré, as for Clemenceau, German militarism could be restrained only by force; with an admixture, it must be admitted, of persistent Separatist intrigue.

So when, after many sessions of Committees, the Third Assembly in 1922 concentrated on the

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

question of disarmament, it passed a formidable list of sixteen resolutions, of which two may be selected to represent what may not unjustly be called the Jekyll and Hyde elements in the Committees. Resolution 16 was the Jekyll resolution, which based material disarmament on moral disarmament, and found in the economic chaos of Europe the true obstacle to moral disarmament. The 14th or Hyde resolution made disarmament depend on Security and Security depend upon force. Jekyll argued 'the general economic situation is such that the world is kept in a condition of suspicion and unrest incompatible with real peace. Without peace, without moral disarmament, plans for the reduction of material disarmament are vain'. Hyde on the other hand reasoned that no scheme of reduction of armaments can be fully successful unless it is general; that in the present state of the world many governments would not undertake serious reductions without a satisfactory guarantee of safety; that such could be found in mutual defensive agreements, either general or partial.

Although both Jekyll and Hyde resolutions were passed by the Third Assembly, and the Temporary Mixed Commission was given the task of drawing up a 'mutual defensive agreement' embodying the sense of the sixteen resolutions, the Jekyll resolution (No. 16) remained a dead letter and only Hyde

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

developed his resolution. The 'draft Treaty of Guarantee' became in the hands of the Committee a 'Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance', and it is worth pausing to explain that this change of name was actually due to the criticisms of military men who said, not without humour, that 'as the word "guarantee" implies the idea of real Security, it would be preferable, in order to avoid misleading public opinion' (by creating a general sense of security, which was the only possible justification of the whole thing) '... to refer to the Treaty as one of mutual "assistance" rather than of mutual "guarantee".' It seems likely also that the word 'assistance' was preferred to the word 'guarantee', as sounding more friendly and mild and therefore contributing to disarm criticism, and make people forget that the 'assistance' might take all the forms of mechanized and chemical warfare.

Lord Cecil, who had taken part in the work of drafting, presented the text of the Draft Treaty to the Fourth Assembly (1923), which requested the Council to submit it to the Governments of States Members for their consideration, asking them to communicate their views in regard to it.

Bad as was this proposed Draft Treaty and hopeless, even among its begetters, as a sound foundation for disarmament, it has to be remembered, in excusing it, under what pressure from the France of

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

Poincaré it was at last drawn up. The Western Front was menacing (to Germany), Lord Curzon's envenomed correspondence with the Quai d'Orsay was certainly very entertaining, but it was as ineffectual in protecting Germany as it was effectual in exasperating France. A prolongation of these relations must have inevitably led to worse disasters. Moreover, European confidence in the League was being shaken by such incidents as the Polish seizure of Vilna (1920) for which Poland received a dressing-down by the League, being then allowed to retain her booty, while Lithuania's continued protests were for several years regarded merely as a bore at Geneva. There followed the collapse of the Treaty of Sèvres, with the Greek rout in Asia Minor at the hands of Turkey (1922); the rise of Fascism in Italy and the bombardment of Corfu, which resulted in killing a number of harmless Greek refugees, but in nothing worse for Italy than the receiving of a handsome indemnity from Greece for her alleged responsibility for the murder on Greek soil of an Italian commissioner. Moreover, since 1917, and in spite of a British trade agreement with the U.S.S.R. in 1921, the general unsettlement due to the Russian revolution and sundry interventions by Western Powers, was still felt.

The best contributions to peace had been the Washington Conference (1921) which was outside

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

the jurisdiction of the League and the settlement by the League of sundry Balkan disputes which were trifling in themselves but might have been used by Great Powers to further their own intrigues.

In outline, the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance provided that if any of the Signatory States had 'cause to apprehend an outbreak of hostilities', owing to the 'aggressive policy or preparations' of any other State, or suspected that State of exceeding the determined limits of armaments, appeal might be made to the Council, which was to inquire into the matter, and 'if it is of opinion that there is reasonable ground for thinking that a menace of aggression has arisen, may take all necessary measures to remove such menace'. These measures included the summoning of all the signatory States in that continent to provide naval, air and land forces and to organize priority of communications, financial co-operation and the appointment of the Higher Command. In the event of actual hostilities breaking out, the Council was to decide in four days which parties were the objects of aggression. So, on the mere suspicion of aggression, or 'menace of aggression', the Council of the League was entitled to wage war in the completest sense and was also given the task of deciding within four days which Power was the aggressor, although there was no definition of aggression.

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

When the military got going on these provisions, they naturally declared that 'if the assistance is to be immediate and effective' it must be given 'in accordance with a pre-arranged plan' and this plan must be made 'an integral part of the Treaty'. Moreover, 'as the methods of attack and defence are constantly changing', the Treaty will have to be 'periodically revised'. It was declared that the guarantee would be useless against a strong Power (or Powers) unless it were accompanied by 'a continental study of the potential offensive power of all possible aggressors'. Although at that time perhaps the conception of 'possible aggressors' was not as extensive as, owing to bitter experience it now is, these intensive studies would have kept the League happily employed for an indefinite period on planning League wars, and it would certainly have been effectually headed off from the next very leisurely processes recommended for reduction of armaments as a corollary of 'Security'. A curious distinction was made between the General Treaty and the Partial Treaties which would have proliferated from it: the signatory States in the case of Partial Treaties were not even to be required to delay for four days, but might 'put into immediate execution' the plan agreed on between them, merely informing the Council of what they had done. There is something analogous to this in the ambi-



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

guous Franco-Russian treaty of May 1935, and it obviously makes nonsense of the League's authority.

The critics pointed out that in the process of intensively studying 'potential aggressors', the general Treaty would have to be 'split up into a series of separate treaties, each of which would provide in the greatest detail against a certain hypothetical case of aggression'. Thus would the League, by its own act, break itself into pieces. We can make a rough guess at the nature of the 'separate treaties' at any given moment of time; but the diplomatic kaleidoscope has shaken Europe into so many different patterns since the war that the Council, if it had accepted the task proposed by this measure, would have had no time 'to achieve international peace and security'. It would have been kept busy breaking up the League and re-arranging the pieces.

That such a scheme should be seriously propounded at Geneva and enthusiastically supported by the League of Nations Union here was certainly disquieting. By far the best criticisms of it came — ironically enough — from War Offices, not because it was likely to keep peace, but on the ground that it was unworkable as a system of war sanctions. What seems never to have been recognized by its begetters is that, once the Members were involved in war-sanctions, the opinion of the military must

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

prevail over all other considerations and that their perfectly justifiable object, once they were called in, would be to win the war — ‘at all costs’, as a favourite saying goes.

The League was, as a matter of fact, split up by partial treaties even before the first Assembly, but at least this splitting was not an act of the League itself, nor had the League been given the duty of working out in detail how the splits could be further envenomed by the preparation of ‘pre-arranged plans’ for war, though doubtless such plans could be found in the war offices of a good many Members. The Draft Treaties would have served to throw the cloak of League respectability round the old-style diplomacy, very much in the same way as Mr. Worldly Wiseman uses Christianity as a cloak for his age-old purposes.

It is an instructive exercise to compare the provisions of these drafts with (1) the actual conduct of post-war diplomacy on the one hand and (2) the pretension that they represented a new and universally pacific international outlook. The course of post-war diplomacy has sadly resembled pre-war diplomacy and it has, to a very large extent, actually conformed to the methods recommended in the drafts. States Members *have* formed partial treaties, *have* made pre-arranged military plans, *have* even ‘put into immediate execution’ some of

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

their plans without serious obstacles from the League. Members have not allowed the League to maintain a universally pacific international outlook, but at least we have been spared the sight of the League becoming the active instrument of its own destruction. For in 1924 the Draft Treaties were rejected by the new British Government.

THE GENEVA PROTOCOL. When the Fifth Assembly met in September 1924, it was in a very different atmosphere from that in which the Draft Treaties had been discussed. In France M. Herriot had succeeded M. Poincaré, while Mr. Ramsay MacDonald led a minority government which was being allowed, for a few months at least, to see what it could do to retrieve the ever-worsening situation. Mr. MacDonald's first international acts were characteristic: the liberation from prison of Mr. Gandhi, the resumption of friendly relations with Russia and the initiation of an agreement between France, Belgium, Britain and Germany, resulting in what was known as the 'Dawes Plan'. Whatever may have been Mr. MacDonald's private opinions on the subject of Reparations, he knew very well the risks of failing to get anything by attempting too much. Therefore the Dawes Plan was advanced as a way of obtaining Reparations and coaxing France out of the Ruhr. The great merits of the plan were as aforesaid, that, for the first time, the Allies really

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

discussed procedure with Germany, instead of dictating to her; that some provision was made for arbitral decisions (as opposed to the Sword-of-Brennus procedure enforced at Versailles) and that financial and monetary considerations were taken into account. It was understood that the French would evacuate the Ruhr and there was some talk of the admission of Germany to the League.

The Jekyll Resolution (No. 16) was beginning to receive its share of attention.

Some tears were shed in France at the British decision to reject the Draft Treaty, and a half-hearted attempt was even made at Geneva to get the rejection discussed. But wiser counsels prevailed and M. Benesh, at that time the ingenious and tireless Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia, set to work to compound a draft which, after five weeks of strenuous discussion, was passed by the Assembly and sent forth for the consideration of all the Member States under the title 'Protocol for the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes'.

Considerable excitement was shown about the possibility of the admission of Germany to the League. Mr. MacDonald favoured immediate admission and, in his first speech to the Assembly, pointed dramatically to the 'menace of that empty chair'.<sup>1</sup> But M. Herriot was evasive, though he did

<sup>1</sup> See Frontispiece.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

not express himself in direct opposition. It became clear, too, that Dr. Stresemann would have great and very natural opposition to overcome in his own country, where six years of Occupation, five years of administration of the Treaty of Versailles, and of exclusion from the League and twenty-one months of Separatist intrigues in the Ruhr had left marks not easily obliterated. The political achievement of that Assembly was therefore the Draft Protocol which was in fact a compromise between the views of the more northerly Powers in Europe and those of France and her Allies.

The Protocol, in the form of a provisional treaty, was composed of elaborate amendments to the Covenant and these, not being contrary to the Covenant, could be accepted at once by any Members desiring to accept them; these Members also bound themselves to make every effort in their power to secure the introduction of the amendments into the Covenant. There would thus have been created a difficult situation: of States bound only by the Covenant, of others bound by the Protocol in addition to the Covenant, and of States outside the League, bound by neither. The reason of this complexity was that the drafters of the Protocol were in a hurry and they knew from experience what a slow process amendment to the Covenant would be. The coming into force of the Protocol was made con-

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

ditional upon the adoption of a plan of reduction of armaments and if the plan were not carried out by a certain date, to be fixed by the disarmament conference, the Protocol became null and void.

The official title of the Protocol is one of those smooth euphemisms beloved of diplomacy, which disguise everything to which any right-minded person could take exception. If indeed all the Protocol proposed and elaborated had been 'the peaceful settlement of international disputes', no one could have made any objection to it. The trouble was that, while developing arbitral procedure, defining aggression and providing for an International Conference for the Reduction of Armaments which was to be convened for June 15th, 1925, and to which 'all other states' were to be invited, the Protocol also developed the sanctions procedure which was to follow 'automatically' upon a declaration of aggression. Sanctions, military as well as economic, were in the Covenant and remained, but the Protocol added a provision that the Council should be 'entitled to receive undertakings from States *determining in advance the military, naval and air forces which they would be able to bring into action immediately* to ensure the fulfilment of the obligations in regard to sanctions which result from the Covenant and the present Protocol'. [Italics mine.]

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

So the Council was no longer actually to negotiate partial treaties nor to conduct a war, as in the Draft Treaties; but as, obviously, no Power could state 'in advance' of a rupture exactly what forces it could promise, unless it knew also where the forces were to be required and against whom and in support of whom, we were back again at the 'pre-arranged plan', and very near the 'partial treaties' which were among the most objectionable of the provisions of the earlier instrument. Mr. Henderson opposed this provision, but the French were adamant and he had to yield.<sup>1</sup>

The automatic nature of the declaration of aggression by the Council was decided by an ingenious provision: certain acts were declared to be acts of aggression, and it was agreed that 'a presumption of aggression' should lie against any State which committed any of these acts and it required a unanimous vote of the Council to remove this presumption. The idea, as explained by M. Politis, who was Rapporteur for the Third Committee of the Assembly, was that the Council should have no choice in the matter and would not even be called upon to vote.

<sup>1</sup> This is a point about which the present writer has a very vivid recollection, for it was the cause of the only difference she ever had with Mr. Henderson. When she found that (at a meeting which she missed) he had yielded the point, she referred to it in conversation with him and he said, with some warmth, that he had opposed it as long as he had been able and had been forced to yield, and 'I didn't expect you to reproach me when I had done my best'.

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

‘There is’, he said, ‘no decision to be taken, but an obligation to be fulfilled.’

Another interesting provision was that by which, if the Council failed at once to determine the aggressor, it should be *bound* to enjoin upon the belligerents an armistice and should fix the terms of the armistice, acting if need be by a two-thirds majority, and should supervise its execution. (This provision alone might entail having a considerable force at the immediate disposal of the League.) Any belligerent which refused to accept the armistice or violated its terms was to be deemed the aggressor. Presumably if both belligerents refused (as might easily happen in these days of bombing planes, when there is said to be no real defence except retaliatory aggression) both would have to be declared aggressors. There was silence as to what would — theoretically — happen next. The League had not yet become inured to the wholesale breaking of pledges by its own Members and did not face the possibility, nay even the probability of their wrecking the whole house of cards of Security by not playing the game according to the rules laid down at *La Table Verte*.

It will be seen from this very slight sketch that there were a good many snags in the Protocol itself, even if those who passed it at the Assembly remained in power and secured its ratification by their



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

Governments. But the Protocol was more short-lived even than the other proposals. For the British Labour Government went out of office in November and the new Conservative Government threw out the Protocol.

Although this seemed catastrophic to some people, it is worth noting that all the discussions did at least have some permanent effects upon subsequent agreements. The 'outlawry of war' formally accepted by nearly the whole world in 1928 took its first form in the Protocol; the acceptance of the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court of International Justice and of the universal obligation to arbitrate on non-justiciable disputes was given further impetus; some idea, though not an adequate one, of the difficulty of determining aggression was obtained. In addition to the objections already stated, there are two overwhelming objections to sanctions, either as provided in the Covenant or in the Protocol. One is that no ingenuity in paper provisions for determining aggression can overcome the real difficulty in many cases of ascertaining the facts; they are not by any means always so clear as they were in the two later cases of Manchuria and Ethiopia. The other is that, as Sir Austen (then Mr.) Chamberlain said at Geneva in 1925, the States which are too nervous to disarm 'do not doubt that the Covenant, if kept, would be sufficient

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

to protect them at least from attack by those who have signed it. What they doubt is whether, when it comes to the point, the Covenant *will* be kept'.

No amount of elaboration and ingenuity, no multiplication of Pacts and Pledges will take the place of Confidence. And Powers which have sat round a table, each intent on getting as much and on giving as little as possible, will not have inspired confidence in each other. The determination of the French to obtain from partial treaties a security which they could not believe the League itself offered them, is a striking commentary on the degree of confidence which the League had won after six years of existence. Dare we say that French confidence in the League has increased since 1925?

TREATY OF LOCARNO. For a while after the collapse of the Protocol, international affairs went ill nearly all over the world. The murder of the Socialist Deputy, Matteotti, in Italy, had been followed by the strengthening of the Terror there. The murder of Sir Lee Stack in Egypt caused a regrettable outburst from the British Foreign Office, containing a threat to the security of Egypt's share of Nile water; an outburst for which, however, the Foreign Secretary made amends later. The situation in Egypt was so anomalous that there had to be some very fine hair-splitting before it could be argued that the League could have no jurisdiction in an Anglo-Egyptian

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

quarrel. Egyptian relations were carried on through the Foreign Office, for Egypt did not form part of the British Empire, and yet any dispute, even if it threatened to 'disturb international peace', or good understanding, could not, it was argued, be brought before the League, because it came within British domestic jurisdiction. Egypt, not being a Member, was estopped from appealing and no Member cared to risk the wrath of Britain by invoking Article 11 of the Covenant.

The Riff war with Spain and France — also ingeniously argued out of League competence — went horribly on. The situation in China became greatly embittered by the shooting down of some Chinese students in Shanghai by the Police of the Shanghai International Settlement and in October 1925 there occurred an ugly revolt of the Druses against France, the mandatory Power in Syria. It did not seem as if arbitrary and anarchic use of force were diminishing and there was little sign that Membership of the League had any influence on the foreign policy of Members.

Things looked black in the beginning of 1925, when the Cologne area was due for evacuation, and it became clear from an article by M. Paul-Boncour in *L'Œuvre* that, unless France received some sort of guarantee supplementary to the general guarantee of the Covenant, she would stay in the Ruhr and, if

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

the British evacuated the Cologne area, France would march in. Then, under the fostering wisdom of Lord D'Abernon in Berlin, Dr. Stresemann, on February 9th, 1925, made his remarkable offer.

He declared that Germany would now of her free will accept for all time the settlement of her western frontier which had been imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, and he proposed a Pact by which the Powers interested in the Rhine—'above all England, France, Italy and Germany' should enter into an agreement *vis-à-vis* the Government of the United States as a trustee, not to wage war against a contracting State. Comprehensive arbitration treaties were proposed in connection with these proposals.

The suggestion of bringing in America as a 'trustee' fell to the ground immediately, but M. Briand and Mr. Chamberlain expressed their willingness to discuss the proposal. Their first condition was that Germany must join the League. It is significant of the dictatorial state of mind of the victors that as soon as they left off saying 'You shall not', they leapt to saying 'You shall' join the League. They also expressed themselves as anxious that 'the search for the guarantees of Security which the world demands' (the whole world, no less!) 'cannot involve any modification of the Peace Treaties'. Not the glimmering of a notion that the Peace

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

Treaties themselves were among the most potent destroyers of Security! They went even further, and declared that the agreements must not 'result in practice' in a modification. Little men, little men, would you try to stop the world revolving?

The German conception had been to 'prepare the way for a world convention', but Mr. Chamberlain would none of that. It must be a partial treaty. Negotiations were continued for a while at long range, Britain talking to Germany only through France, which was odd, as the proposal became one of *common* guarantee. It took France eighteen weeks to reply to the first German note, while Germany took nearly five to reply to the first French reply. The Allies flatly refused to consider including a pledge of disarmament, although the proposed treaty came to be called 'The Security Pact' and France had made disarmament depend on Security. It was hard to see what Germany was to find in the Pact unless some modifications of the treaty and some reduction of the armaments of the victors were to follow. In regard to disarmament, all Germany received was the pious aspiration quoted in Chapter III.

One contribution to the better understanding of the effects of the Sanctions clauses on the votes of Members should be mentioned here. Germany was naturally much concerned at the effect on her good

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

faith in accepting the Sanctions Clauses of the Covenant of her disarmed condition in an armed Europe and with foreign armies still in occupation of the Rhineland. She doubted whether it would be possible for her under such conditions to involve herself in a policy of Sanctions, or to allow the passage of troops belonging to Sanctionist Powers over German territory. It was pointed out to her that, as a Member of the Council of the League, Germany would have the right to vote against a report concerning a dispute (under Article 15) and could thus prevent the League, not only from imposing sanctions, but from making a unanimous report; and this not for the honest reason that she disagreed with the report, but for the dishonest reason that she was determined to avoid the consequences to herself of a report which might entail her taking part in Sanctions. The fear of being called upon for Sanctions has, in fact, had an incalculable but certainly very great effect in preventing League decisions and even in preventing disputes from being brought before the League.

The leisurely methods were continued and, with a discourtesy which should surely by that time have abated, the French actually showed their reply of June 16th to Belgium, Italy, Poland and Czechoslovakia, before sending it to Germany. Those who regard Germany as inordinately touchy should

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

consider her endurance of this tactless behaviour. The Treaty of Mutual Guarantee established the maintenance of Germany's western frontiers and the demilitarized zone in the Rhineland; but it did not demilitarize this German zone as regarded France, Belgium and Britain. Only *German* militarism was excluded from the German Rhineland. The armies of occupation remained for five more years in the demilitarized zone.

The Treaty was finally signed on October 16th, 1925, at Locarno, by Germany, Belgium, France, Britain, Italy, Poland and Czechoslovakia. The Preamble contained a phrase worth noting, because it seemed to suggest a community of responsibility for the war instead of the attribution of one-sided war-guilt. It began, 'Anxious to satisfy the desire for security and protection which animates the peoples upon whom fell the scourge of the war (*les nations qui ont eu à subir le fléau de la guerre*)'. This was not, however, followed up or elucidated. Still, if a scourge falls upon you, you can hardly be supposed to have wielded that scourge yourself. The parties to the Treaty collectively and severally guaranteed the maintenance of the *status quo* on the west of Germany, while Germany and Belgium and also Germany and France mutually undertook not to invade each other or resort to war with each other. The guaranteeing Powers (Britain, Italy, Poland and

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

Czechoslovakia) undertook immediately to come to the help of the Party attacked, whichever it might be — France, Belgium or Germany.

The *status quo* mentioned included the continued demilitarization of the Rhineland. So, when Germany marched into the Rhineland in March 1936, though sanctions could not have been applied to her under the Covenant, the guaranteeing Powers could have acted under the Treaty of Locarno, which Germany denounced unilaterally. This would not, however, have prevented the Council of the League from issuing its own report. There was much discussion as to whether all disputes about the Treaty of Versailles were, subsequently to the ratification of Locarno, to be referred to the League or no. The provisions of Versailles were to remain, but Mr. Chamberlain was of opinion that reference of disputes concerning them could now be made to the League; French and English interpretations were not in complete agreement on this point. Elaborate arbitration and conciliation treaties between Germany on the one hand and Belgium and Poland on the other were included, and the treaty was to come into force after Germany had become a Member of the League of Nations.

There was much that was good about Locarno. Mr. Chamberlain, who was lukewarm at first, became enthusiastic about it. The picnics on the Lake



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

of Locarno, the loving-cup at the banquet in London were hailed as showing a new spirit of confidence and even friendship: the Locarno Spirit. That was all to the good. Also that Germany should at long last be secure of membership of the League. The expressed intention that the guarantee should be common was also good: in theory, the guarantors (Britain, Italy, Poland and Czechoslovakia) guaranteed Germany against France as well as France against Germany. Critics over here were met by the assertion that 'of course' France would never be guilty of aggression, so that there was no danger at all in guaranteeing a defenceless Germany against a fully-armed France; this in spite of the fact that the French had invaded and were actually occupying the Ruhr. It was declared, with an optimism that some found difficulty in sharing, that Britain's guarantee imposed no obligations on the Dominions or on India, which had not been consulted. But obviously if Britain were drawn into war by her guarantee, this must seriously affect the obligations and interests of the Dominions.

Those who objected to partial treaties, because they seemed to make sectional obligations of more value than the universal obligations under the Covenant, could not but think that this treaty did seem to make two categories of honour. Even those who objected for one reason or another to the Sanc-

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

tions Clauses of the Covenant did not wish them merely to crumble away because Members put their sectional obligations above their universal.

A circumstance wounding to British pride in being foremost among reasonable people was that, while Britain seemed prepared to urge arbitration upon others, she was not prepared to accept the universal obligation even to resort to the Permanent Court for justiciable issues, still less to compulsory Arbitration on what Mr. Chamberlain called questions of 'vital interests, independence, or honour'; those being precisely the points upon which it is most difficult and most necessary to be willing not to be judge in your own cause. This unhappy situation was, however, changed in 1929 when Great Britain led a movement at Geneva to extend these obligations which she herself accepted.

The test of the value of Locarno lay in its fruits. It was heralded as a great measure for attaining Security. Disarmament depended, so they said, on Security. Would the French now disarm? When they were at last secure, would they speedily evacuate the occupied Rhineland? How could the Locarno spirit live under the trampling feet of an army of occupation? Locarno was signed in 1925. The last foreign soldier went out of the Rhineland in 1930. The Nazis polled a heavy increase in their votes that year. It was not Hitler, unaided, who

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

created the Nazi party; he had powerful helpers among the victors in the war.

There has been much misunderstanding in this country about the Locarno Treaty, which was always much more popular here than in France (where it soon appeared that it was not considered to give Security) or in Germany (where the corollary of the departure of the Army of Occupation was delayed for five years and that of a corresponding disarmament of Great Powers other than Germany never followed at all). The Locarno Treaty, during the eleven years that it was in force, did not contribute materially to a sense of Security in France, and this, among others, for the following reason. France has always demanded not only a guarantee of military support against Germany but detailed plans, without which the support would be robbed of much of its efficacy. But the guarantee given at Locarno was common to France and Germany: Britain undertook to guarantee Germany as well as France. It was impossible for Britain to make detailed military plans with France against Germany, unless she at the same time made detailed plans with Germany against France; which was absurd.

Germany had been promised the support of the Locarno Powers in her application for admission to the League of Nations and for a permanent seat on the Council; the permanent Members were four,

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

France, Britain, Italy, Japan; the six elected (non-permanent) Members that year were Belgium, Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Spain, Sweden and Uruguay. It seemed certain that, at the Extraordinary Assembly summoned for March 1926, Germany would be elected a Member, with a permanent seat on the Council.

THE EXTRAORDINARY ASSEMBLY. The behaviour of some six Members of the League at this Assembly is worth mention as an exhibition of their confidence in the League and of their own claims to the confidence of their fellow Members and of the new Member they were summoned to admit.

As explained in Chapter II, the Permanent Members of the Council are the 'great Powers' and it had always been understood that, whenever Germany and Russia were granted membership, a permanent seat on the Council would be assured to each of them. In December 1925, actually the month in which the Locarno Treaty was ratified, the Swedish Government accidentally heard of a secret understanding at Locarno in October between M. Briand and Count Skrzynski (representing Poland) that France would support Poland in claiming a Permanent Seat at the Assembly summoned to admit Germany. Poland, be it noted, had not even been elected a non-permanent Member. Sweden communicated with Belgium, Norway and Denmark,

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

and in January 1926 warned Paris and London that she and others would oppose in March the admission to the Council of any state but Germany, and in particular mentioned their objection to permanent seats being created for Poland, Spain or Brazil.

The British and French Governments made no reply whatever to Sweden, but rumours began to spread and the matter came up in the House of Commons, where the opinion was strongly held that Germany alone should be admitted in March. Spain rested her claim to British support on the fact that five years previously, at a secret meeting of the Council when no minutes were kept, Lord Balfour supported her claim, which was defeated by Brazil. Sir Austen (knighted after the Locarno Treaty) admitted that he had 'renewed to Spain the assurance that we would in suitable circumstances support the renewal of her claim'. It was known that Señor Quiñones de Leon, Spain's representative, considered that Britain owed some return for the value of Spain's services in inducing the League to give Britain a twenty-five years' mandate in 'Iraq, and later, the Spanish Government repeated the statement that Spain had been willing to contribute to unanimity on the Mosul award, a service (to Britain) for which some return was expected; an unblushing admission of the great principle of log-rolling. This principle has been much in practice at Geneva, as

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

elsewhere, and it is difficult to draw the line at the point where it becomes a corrupt practice. One must concede that, in diplomacy, it is necessary constantly to yield something in the hope of obtaining something in return. It is important, on the other hand, to remember that the things you yield should be your own and not the property of others, and that a high duty, such as a vote on a public body, should not be saleable at all, for any consideration.

Sir Austen went to Geneva with a confused mandate from the British Cabinet, but the ruling principle was that 'no change in the Council can be admitted which would have the effect of preventing or delaying the entry of Germany'. The unfortunate following sentence ran, 'It would be best that Germany should, as a member of the Council, have full responsibility for any further change in the Council beyond her own admission'. Instead of qualifying this as the *best* course, it should have been said that it was the *only honest* course. M. Undén, the Swedish delegate, declared from first to last that 'the sole object of this special session of the Assembly was the admission of Germany into the League and the allocation to Germany of a permanent seat on the Council'.

For twelve days Sir Austen Chamberlain and M. Briand contrived to hold up the delegations which

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

had come to the Assembly, by private conversations, in which the so-called claims of Poland, Spain and Brazil to permanent seats were canvassed and made the object of a confused number of proposals. There was one consideration only which a good Member should have had in mind: how to make the Council as impartial as possible. No one could claim that the admission of Germany alone would unduly favour Germany, for Germany at that time had no allies. But Spain, Poland, Brazil were not thinking of impartiality; they were thinking in terms of national egotisms. So was France, anxious to push her ally, Poland, and to make a 'counterpoise' to Germany. Sir Austen was willing to oblige France and Spain, at the expense of Germany. Japan held aloof from the European squabble. The South American States urged Brazil to do nothing to hinder the admission of Germany. Czechoslovakia and Belgium were helpful, but to Sweden fell the honour of maintaining the honesty of the League.

In the course of these extraordinary negotiations, which were not public, but to which the Press had access, groups of interested parties proposed successively:

1. To create a new permanent seat for Poland.
2. To create a new permanent seat for Spain and to induce the Assembly to vote for Poland as

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

the non-permanent Member who should take Spain's vacant seat.

3. To induce Sweden and Czechoslovakia (re-elected only the previous autumn) to resign, and to induce the Assembly to vote for Poland and Holland in their place. Holland was supposed to be a sort of 'counterpoise' to Poland. Hence this proposal for a general post which even M. Briand stigmatized as *peu élégant!*

All this time the German delegation, headed by Luther and Stresemann, were kept in their hotel waiting for admission, and the delegations to the Assembly were kept waiting to assemble; for, since the opening session on March 8th, there was no plenary session till March 17th, when the Assembly met, to be told that, as the Council could not agree on the conditions of Germany's admission, they might all go home again.

It would have been discreditable enough if the Council had disagreed on such a subject, which had nothing to do with any unfitness of Germany, but only with the wrangling of other Members for pride of place. The actual situation, however, was much worse. For even the Council was not allowed to meet decently and in order, to make this crucial decision. On March 15th Sir Austen and M. Briand went across from their hotels to the hotel at



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

which the German delegation was staying, and informed them that the obstacles to the election of Germany appeared insuperable and recommended that the question should be adjourned to September. It seems that, except for Italy and Belgium, no other Council Members were even consulted upon this step; Spain, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Brazil and Uruguay were treated as non-existent. It could not even be claimed that this proposal was made by all the Locarno Powers, for Czechoslovakia was omitted; history does not tell why. The fact that so important a step was taken without a Council meeting and without any overt protest from any of the Members of the Council shows how very far the League still was from being a body corporately conscious of its own dignity.

That evening the Germans (so 'touchy'!), the Germans (so 'tactless'!) consented to sign a *communiqué* declaring their continued attachment to 'the work of peace which they realized at Locarno' and their confidence that 'the agreement which they reached with regard to the conditions for the entry of Germany into the League of Nations will be realized'. This statement was signed also by Belgium, France, Britain, Italy, Poland and Czechoslovakia; for Dr. Benesh was never the man to make trouble.

This was the story which the great European

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

Powers gave to Dr. Luther and Dr. Stresemann to take back to the German people. Judge then, how difficult it was for them to persuade their people that the League truly represented a 'comity of nations!' Werner Hahmann, the David Low of Germany, had a cartoon which showed Germany as having secured a 'Permanent Seat' — in the Waiting Room of the League of Nations. There sat the German *Michel*, with the dove of Peace in a cage by his side.

The following quotation is from a description by the present writer, compiled at that time from various sources, the most important being the official *Journal* and the late Mr. J. G. Hamilton, of the *Manchester Guardian*, who was present throughout, and who, in a long private interview, gave her many interesting details:

'Their aims being unavowable, it is not surprising that the five or six chaffering States refused to hold formal Council meetings, to have an Agenda, to keep Minutes, or to conduct the business with any regard to the broad legal aspects of the case. There was no preliminary preparation. Sometimes all the Members of the Council met informally; sometimes the German ministers joined them at tea; often two or three Members met for private conversations with or without the

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

Germans. The Council, as a Council, never met decently and in order, and the final catastrophic decision was actually taken without the knowledge of six of the Council Members. One is reluctantly led to the conclusion that the Locarnist Members really had no conception of the legal implications of their conduct. They seem not to have grasped the fact that they were tampering with the Constitution of a World Court by the mixed method of a game of poker and a tea-party. What should have been plain to them by a little thought had to be proved to them by disaster: namely, that they could not raise the claim of one member without raising the claims of others; that the question of numbers was connected with the question of "Great Powers" and the question of unanimity and a host of other questions, which came about their bewildered heads like wasps once their nest has been disturbed. Small wonder if this conduct of a group within the League angered and dismayed the other States collected for the Assembly whose representatives were kept kicking their heels while the Locarnists chattered. If it be said that Spain and Brazil were the two Powers which created the most trouble, and that they were not Locarnist Powers, we would point out that this is a very superficial judgment. Spain's claim took on importance at that time

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

precisely because her promotion would have made room for Poland; and Brazil — in so far as she was not the whipping-boy of the discomfited plotters — was able to make of her legitimate resentment at the dictation of the Locarnists a decent cover for naked egotism.'

Sir Austen never seems to have been aware that his conduct was anarchical. He complained bitterly afterwards that it was the publicity given to the whole preposterous procedure which had caused all the mischief. But it was fortunate indeed that there was at least a measure of publicity, otherwise the whole blame would have been thrown upon Germany. As it was, M. Briand moved on March 17th 'that the Assembly should express regret that the difficulties encountered have prevented the attainment of the purpose for which it was convened', and the hope that they might be overcome between now and the ordinary September 1926 session. He complimented the Germans on having faced the difficulties *avec une certaine sérénité d'esprit, avec une véritable noblesse de cœur auxquelles moi, Français, je tiens à rendre hommage.*<sup>1</sup>

Fine words never failed M. Briand.

M. Undén, the Swede, who had held the fort for

<sup>1</sup> With a certain serenity of spirit, with true generosity to which I, a Frenchman, desire to pay tribute.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

the League till he actually fell ill after having endured a week of bullying, and had to be interviewed in bed, contented himself with repeating the Swedish principle.

That splendid warrior in the cause of humanity, Dr. Nansen, indignantly proclaimed:

‘The machinery of the League has not been used at all and therefore the League itself cannot be blamed for what has happened. The machinery of the League did not even begin to work; no use has been made of it. What has happened has been that there have been private conversations; there has been no meeting of the Council and no meetings of the Assembly to discuss the question. There has been no record kept for the future at all; people in the future will have no record of what happened in Geneva in March 1926.’

The delegates to the Assembly, shocked and depressed, could see no alternative but to pass the resolution and go home each to his own place. A Commission was set up by the Council to consider the constitution of the Council, and Germany was invited to sit on this Commission, an invitation which she accepted, although some purists held it a mistake that, not yet being a Member of the League, she should have any say in the composition of the League’s Council.

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

But the Commission had to deal with so many questions that had been raised during those twelve stormy days that it was well Germany, who had been the victim, should have a hand in salvaging the situation. The Commission had, among other things, to consider whether regional representation were desirable — so many for each great ethnic or geographic group; whether the system of rotation should be established, so that the same States could not be re-elected year after year; whether the rule of unanimity should be maintained or relaxed at least for certain classes of questions; what proportion the number of permanent members should bear to the number of non-permanent, and the difficult question of the size of the whole Council.

The history of this sad and squalid episode, which could never have occurred if the great Powers had been as civilized as some of the smaller ones, may be concluded by a quotation from *The Times* of March 18th, 1926:

‘Geneva, the home of an institution designed to prevent war, was suddenly transformed into the scene of the crudest manifestations of those very intrigues that drive desperate nations into the blind arbitrament of war. The depths of national rivalries, suspicions and jealousies, were revealed

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

in full measure. The spectacle, revolting as it is, has at least been instructive.'

The Locarno Treaty itself had not been very popular in Germany and was ratified in the Reichstag by a vote of only 291 to 174, Nationalists and Communists voting against it, on November 27th, 1925; doubtless the minority would have been greatly enlarged if the vote could have been re-taken at the end of the following March. Another circumstance which prevented its becoming popular in Germany was that the Ambassadors' Conference (representing the Allies) decided to retain 75,000 soldiers in the Army of Occupation, because M. Painlevé said it would be 'inconvenient' to reduce French troops further. In 1914 the German army in the Rhineland was only 45,000 strong and in the year of Locarno the German army had been reduced to 100,000 for the whole of Germany. It may have struck Germans that 'demilitarization' was scarcely descriptive of what had been accomplished in the Rhineland. They had merely been forced to exchange their own army for a much greater army of their conquerors. But it has a charming sound.

It is pleasant to record that in May, following the disastrous meeting of the Extraordinary Assembly, the first tentative approach to disarmament was made by the first session of the Preparatory Com-

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

mission for a Conference for the Limitation and Reduction of Armaments. Thus, eight years after the Allies had destroyed Germany's Security, they timidly began going round the mulberry bush of Disarmament themselves, under the critical eyes of their late foes, accepted as co-Members of the League. Russia would not at that time attend a conference in Switzerland owing to the still unsettled dispute about the murder of her delegate, Vorovsky, at the Lausanne Conference in 1923 by a man who boasted of the crime, but was acquitted by the cantonal Court. Russia was not so popular then as now, and the murder of a Russian in Switzerland was held to be only the natural reprisal for murders by Russians in Russia. When Germany came to an agreement with Russia in October 1925, there were people here who thought the Locarno Pact should be dropped; Germany must intend war if she made friends with Russia. In this year of grace 1937, it is believed very widely that Germany must intend war because she is unfriendly to Russia. So for a long time after the war there was tension between Germany and Poland, owing to the existence of the Polish corridor through Prussia, and we were asked to believe that Germany was hatching war against Poland. Now they have become reconciled (for the time being) it is obvious to the same observers that Germany has made friends with Poland only in



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

order to 'have her hands free' for aggression elsewhere. Well — Journalists and Diplomatic Correspondents must write to live.

The questionnaire proposed to the Preparatory Commission was sufficiently disquieting. It was of a length and complexity to keep any Conference from ever reaching any decision whatever. It seemed to be devised for the purpose of showing that agreed reduction or even limitation of armaments all round was quite impossible; what had been proved was that unilateral enforced reduction was quite possible and had, in fact, been accomplished. From that time till they finally left the Conference in 1933, the German delegates had only one demand to make: equality. At the end of 1931 — six years after Locarno — they were granted 'equality in principle', a mystic gift which did not satisfy Germans who may be presumed to have studied the questionnaire of 1926, with its Seventh Question: '*Admitting that disarmament depends on Security*' (did the Germans ever make full dialectical use of this admission?), '*to what extent is regional disarmament possible in return for Regional Security? Is any scheme of disarmament practicable unless it is general?*' Both the victors and the vanquished could have answered this question in the affirmative without a moment's reflection. '*If regional disarmament is practicable would it promote or lead up to general disarmament?*' That,

## THE HOUSE OF CARDS

again, was easy. The answer was in the negative. But it must not be supposed that the other questions were as easy as that. On the contrary; the attempt to distinguish between 'offensive and defensive armaments' was to keep the Conference employed for a long time and leave it, at the end, at the point from which it started.

Germany was quietly admitted to the League, with a permanent seat on the Council, at the regular (seventh) session of the Assembly in 1926. The Special Committee had botched up a compromise after the muddle of March, and the Assembly was forced — against the will of many of the smaller Powers — to accept the compromise because it was presented as part of the resolution to admit Germany and no one could face putting the election of Germany in doubt again. Three new non-permanent seats were created and re-eligibility for not more than three of the nine. Prince Arfa of Persia described this as a Hierarchy of States composed of: (1) Princes (Permanent Members of the Council); (2) Nobles (Re-eligible non-Permanent Members of the Council); (3) Bourgeoisie (Rotating non-Permanent Members of the Council), and (4) Proletariat (States non-Members of the Council).

The importance of the Council's work and more especially the duties it is supposed to perform in regard to Sanctions make it an object of desire for

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

ambitious states to make their way into the upper regions of this Hierarchy; also a cause of much log-rolling and ingenious vote-catching to secure a favourable Balance of Power. Plans for voting and for catching voters provide a fine field for the ingenuity and activity of young Foreign Office secretaries and secretaries of delegations.

## CHAPTER V

# THE WANING OF CONFIDENCE

British-Italian policy — Agreement on spheres of influence in Ethiopia — Ras Tafari's appeal to the League — Italy's claims in Tunisia — Chinese civil war and European reactions — 1927 Economic Conference under the League — Thrice-Power Naval Treaty failed — Origin and Progress of the Pact of Paris — Progress of the General Act and the Optional Clause — Death of Stresemann and rise of Nazis

IF one cannot feel much satisfaction in the methods by which League Members heralded the admission of Germany and initiated her into the spirit of international co-operation, neither did the next five years give one much hope of better things. Germany kept quiet under Stresemann, so far as outside events went, and all the chief international deeds were done by others. There was a steady waning of any real faith that League Members would allow the League to function in the ways provided by the Covenant.

The Arcos raid in May 1926 again broke off the slowly growing Anglo-Russian trade relations. But it was in the politics of Italy that the more sinister developments might be noted. No one who has at heart the establishment of a true League of Nations can have followed without apprehension the recent

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

policy of British Governments in regard to Italy. Partly it seems to have been dictated by our alliance with France, which has been very nervous about Italy's intentions towards her since the rise of Fascism. Partly, also perhaps, because we had a bad conscience about our non-fulfilment of the war-time secret Treaty of London and were willing to allow Italy 'compensations' — provided they were not at our expense. But chiefly because of our wish not to imperil our own interests in the Mediterranean. Publicly we have always fallen back on 'our old friendship with Italy', and sentimental English travellers sigh when they remember the Roman churches or the lady-tulips in the olive groves at Fiesole.

A less agreeable picture is summoned by the recollection that, as long ago as 1926, Ras Tafari (later to be known as the tragic Hailé Selassie) appealed to the League of Nations against an Anglo-Italian agreement about the respective 'spheres of influence' in Ethiopia of Italy and Britain. It was not seemly for two Members of the League to carve up the territory of a third Member in this way, although both parties explained that they had only made the agreement in the interests of peace (that is to prevent themselves from falling out over the apportionment of 'influence' in Ethiopia). They proclaimed that they did not intend to

## THE WANING OF CONFIDENCE

‘divide the country economically’, but they withdrew their agreement — for the moment.

About that time the Italian press was strident on the subject of Italy’s claim to expansion in North Africa. An article in *Foreign Affairs* (London) of June 1926 had drawn attention to the dangerous situation in *La Tunisie*, where, it was estimated, the Italian colonists numbered 100,000 as compared with the French 40,000; in the town of Tunis the disproportion was even greater, there being some 15,000 French to 50,000 Italians. This constituted an obvious danger to France, in view of the terribly increasing Italian birth-rate and the persistent Fascist propaganda among Tunisian Italians. People’s memories are very short where their own obvious interests are not immediately concerned, but those who followed these events were not surprised by their consequences in January 1935, when M. Laval made a deal with Signor Mussolini, purchasing peace in Tunisia with a promise of French disloyalty to the League over Abyssinia. Was *that* the Gorgon’s Head which turned poor Sir Samuel Hoare to stone, when M. Laval unveiled it to him in December of that year?

All through the years 1925-1929 the situation between this country and China was utterly unbecoming in fellow-Members of the League. Sun-Yat-Sen’s disciples were making a determined effort

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

to get rid of warring Tuchuns and unite the republic under a firm government. The movement spread north and east from Canton under the generalship of Chiang-Kai-Shek and was, as usual, belittled here as merely another squabble of selfish Tuchuns; then it fell under the general British ban of 'Bolshevism' and when the civil war reached Shanghai there was some ugly tampering by the international settlement with 'white' Russian refugees, who were used as police; a very provocative proceeding. British gunboats on the Yangtse river bombarded a Chinese town; there were in 1927 no less than 51 foreign warships in Shanghai harbour. With the various warring Chinese forces converging on the Shanghai region, it was inevitable that 'regrettable incidents' should occur, but the Europeans always managed to kill many times more Chinese than the Chinese killed Europeans. Sir Austen issued in 1926 a Christmas Memorandum which seemed to promise better understanding, but the dispatch of a large mixed 'Defence Force' to Shanghai undid much of the good, and the unhappy phrase 'a united front' (of Europeans against Chinese, in their own country) must have added to the difficulties of that fine diplomatist and humane gentleman, Sir Miles Lampson, then stationed at Peking. It was actually reported that Germans went about with arm-bands proclaiming, 'I am a German', because, being en-

## THE WANING OF CONFIDENCE

tirely unprotected by gun-boats and rifles, Germans were safe from Chinese.

It does not seem a prejudiced inference, that Japan, watching the insolence of Europeans towards China in the throes of a slow revolution, concluded that China would not be able to rely on any sure help from the League of Nations, should Japan intend some day to renew her absorption of further portions of Chinese territory. The invasion of Manchuria in 1931 did not have its origin in that year.

Several movements which seemed to promise good took place in 1927. One was the issue of the Report of the Economic Conference held under League auspices. Being a conference of economists and not of governments, it uttered some perhaps obvious, but certainly very necessary truths. There is a tinge of humour in its demure statement:

‘As the starting point and angle of approach to the different problems, the Conference, as an international conference, has felt bound to assume that international trade is itself to be desired; that the exchange of products and services between persons either of the same country or of different countries is normally to the advantage of both parties; that the greater the rate of exchange of different products between those who by their



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

resources and capacities are best fitted to produce them, the greater is the general economic advantage; and that international exchange of products best and most economically produced in different countries should, therefore, be regarded as the normal rule.

‘There are practical limitations to the application of this principle in policy. But that *international trade is normally and properly not a matter of victory and defeat, or profit of one at the expense of the other, but of mutual benefit*, has necessarily been the basis of this International Conference.’ [Italics mine.]

One hoped at the time that these and similar fairly elementary truths might penetrate foreign offices, at least to the extent of preventing them from being positively harmful to their own as well as to other countries. But it has not been so. Tariffs, like armaments, have gone up and up and up, as our hopes of League influence have gone down and down and down. The British Empire, by Ottawa conference and the like, has contributed her share to the isolation policy she so much condemns in others, and has added a very practical reason to the jealousy with which non-colonial Powers regard the Empire.

The three-power naval treaty between Japan, the United States and Great Britain came to grief. Being argued by a conference of naval experts, little

## THE WANING OF CONFIDENCE

else could be expected. When navalists are asked what they want, they do not say 'Peace'. They are not thinking of Peace, but of Diplomatic Pressure (nothing like sending a gun-boat when arguments become too difficult!), of Prestige and Parity and Punitive Expeditions and Naval Demonstrations and all the other acts disguised under these euphemisms, but which are, essentially, war.

Another movement, started in the same year, was that which resulted in the Pact of Paris (Kellogg Pact) signed on August 27th, 1928, by the United States, France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Japan and Poland; it was left open for signature by all the other Powers of the world and was accepted by nearly all. It renounced war 'as an instrument of national policy'; not for a period of years, but for all time, no less. It provided that the settlement of all disputes should 'never be sought except by pacific means'.

The proposal first made by M. Briand in an interview to the Associated Press in Paris on April 26th, 1927, characteristically suggested that France would be willing to subscribe publicly with the United States to any mutual engagement tending to outlaw war (to use an American expression) *as between those two countries*. Mr. Kellogg did not take this up till his reply on December 28th, when, in very cordial terms, he welcomed the proposal, but suggested that

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

it should be open to 'all the principal Powers of the world'. *The Echo de Paris* had a cartoon entitled '*Sous la douche glacée*', in which poor M. Briand was depicted as shivering under the shower-bath let loose by Uncle Sam. He made an effort to persuade America to sign the pact with France before it was opened to the world, and to make the pledge run that the signatories would 'refrain from any war of *aggression*'. But Mr. Kellogg would accept neither of these amendments.

From that time onwards there were notes and discussions as to what constituted war, aggression, national policy, self-defence and so forth. The Pact was riddled with interpretations and, as Señor de Madariaga pointed out, it is 'evident that a State which offers to renounce all but defensive wars . . . renounces nothing at all, so long as it retains the right to define when it is fighting a defensive war'. Of course! 'Britain's frontier is on the Rhine!' (Although the Rhine is not Germany's frontier. It might perhaps be more exact, though not so poetical to say that Britain's frontier is on the Maginot line.) France might be fighting a defensive war in Czechoslovakia or in Russia; Italy did, in fact, at one time claim that Ethiopia's behaviour at Wal Wal menaced the Security of Italian Somaliland.

In the Introductory chapter to this book further references were made to this ill-starred piece of

## THE WANING OF CONFIDENCE

idealism, which no State, except perhaps Denmark, was prepared to carry out in spirit and in truth.

In 1929 a Labour Government, once more in office in Britain, made a determined effort at the Tenth Assembly to persuade, by its own example, many more states to sign the General Act for the Judicial, Arbitral or Conciliatory settlement of disputes. This included acceptance (under any reservations made at the time) of the Optional Clause for compulsory jurisdiction of the Permanent Court of International Justice, and Great Britain signed with a few not very important reservations.

Only a month after he had delivered one of his thoughtful and reasoned addresses to the Assembly, Gustav Stresemann died, a heartbroken man. He had honestly striven to carry out his *Erfüllungspolitik* (Policy of fulfilment of Germany's undertakings). He had had to hear Poincaré's punctual renderings of '*La Versailles*' at every week end. He had been compelled to see his own compatriots turn more and more against a League which contained victors still refusing to disarm and still remaining in occupation of German land. He saw the abortive 'Young Plan' make a spasmodic effort to reconstitute Reparations, and he must have mourned over the 14,000 suicides which resulted in Germany from the situation in 1927, two years after Locarno. He had tried by tact and submission to persuade the victors

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

to give him that measure of success which might have saved Germany from Naziism. It was refused to Stresemann. It was yielded to the threats of Hitler. In 1930 the Nazi vote was enormously increased. Only a few years previously it had been a laughing-stock. During all these years, Germany had been guilty of no act of aggression and had punctually fulfilled all her duties at Geneva, including attendance at the Preparatory Commission which must have seemed to be preparing to prepare a Disarmament Conference to the crack of doom.

There was considerable indignation in the Allied press because the Reichswehr intrigued with Russia for the delivery of illegal (i.e. anti-Versailles) consignments of arms. In 1926 Herr Scheidemann had spoken in the Reichstag of illegal armament. In 1928 Herr Ossietzky, the Nobel prize-winner of 1936, made public some breaches of the disarmament clauses of the treaty. But no one could seriously maintain that in all those years Germany's armaments were a menace to anyone, or comparable with those of any of the great Powers whose promises remained quite unfulfilled.

How could anyone believe that Powers which had so blindly pursued the old ways of diplomacy would stand the strain of a severe call upon them for united action in an altruistic cause? The test was to be upon them in 1931.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CRASH OF SECURITY

No sense of Security by 1931 — The first aggressions on a large scale were by Japan on China (1931-1935) and by Italy on Ethiopia (1935-1936) — No sanctions attempted against Japan — Failure of the Disarmament Conference (1932-1936) — Herr Hitler became Chancellor — Germany resigned from the League and denounced military, naval and air clauses of the Treaty of Versailles; resumed military control of the Rhineland; denounced Locarno Treaty and Waterways Clauses of the Treaty of Versailles — Italo-Ethiopian war — The League attempted economic sanctions but abandoned them — Spanish civil war — Franco-Russian treaty — Soviet, Fascist, Nazi revolutions compared — Intensified nationalism everywhere, side by side with the growth of the crusading spirit

THIS slight survey of some crucial 'events' dating from the first Secret Treaties shows that the search for Security — conceived as it had been in terms of compulsive force — had not by 1931, the year when the 'economic blizzard' began to be felt all the world over, created any sense of security or of confidence; neither confidence in the League nor confidence in each other among Members of the League. There has been indeed a reasonable degree of confidence in each other between Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland and the three little new Baltic States. Latterly Finland may be numbered

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

among that happy few and if Belgium can settle her domestic quarrels and free herself from dependence on any great Power she may make a ninth among those whose confidence in each other has little to do with Security as envisaged by great Powers and in so far as it exists does so because these States have not allowed themselves to become victims of the obsession.

Another curious circumstance should carry its lesson too. Whereas the outcry and the compulsion and the propaganda had, since the end of the war, been directed by the victors against the vanquished, as being still the prime cause of insecurity and the pretext for persistent repression and one-sided disarmament — behold! the first aggression on a major scale was the work of a great Power, one of the Allied and Associated Powers in the war, a Permanent Member of the Council from its foundation, a signatory of the Washington Treaties, an original signatory of the Pact of Paris — Japan! Barely four years later, another of the Allies in the War, European this time, a Permanent Member of the Council from its foundation, a guarantor under the Treaty of Locarno, an original signatory of the Pact of Paris, was guilty after long and careful preparation, of indubitable aggression — Italy! Both these aggressions were against fellow-Members of the League. Both were unprovoked. Both were

## THE CRASH OF SECURITY

successful. Both ended in annexation, the first veiled, the second naked. During these years also Bolivia and Paraguay (both Members) waged an obstinate war and at the end, Paraguay, disgusted by the lifting in Bolivia's favour of the arms embargo through a Conference of American states, resigned from the League on February 24th, 1935.

Two of the four original Permanent Members of the Council had thus been guilty of the very crime which they would be empowered to judge if it were committed by another Power. Of the other two, it has had to be noted that the army of France had been used to intimidate Germany under cover of a breach of the untouchable Treaty of Versailles; that the army and navy of Great Britain had been used in China without any possibility of appeal to the League at that time, owing to the state of civil war which made it doubtful where Chinese sovereignty resided; that Britain's air force was being used to bomb 'outlying regions' on the borders of India, where also the League's writ did not run. The use of armed forces in these cases could be justified on legal grounds, but it did not contribute to confidence among its victims, nor to any permanent settlement of difficulties.

The two major aggressions are so recent that the briefest summary of them is all that is necessary as a reminder. Japanese aggression on Manchuria had



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

been carefully prepared and began with the occupation of Mukden in September 1931. In order that there should be no doubt as to the aggressor, the Chinese at first did not resist, and did not even call for sanctions, but applied to the League under Article 11. Both sides promised to withdraw their armies, but as Japan, the invader, did not keep her promise, a feeble opposition was later put up by the Chinese people while awaiting League intervention.

The following diary records the most salient points in this breach of the Covenant:

1931

*October.* The Council suggested Japanese withdrawal, which was refused.

*December.* The Council set up a Commission under Lord Lytton to inquire on the spot and make recommendations.

1932

*January.* Japan conquered Manchuria South of the Great Wall, after a guerrilla war.

China appealed to the League under Articles 10 and 15.

U.S.A. announced that it would refuse to recognize any situation arising out of a breach of the Kellogg Pact.

*28th.* Japanese bombarded Chapei (Chinese

## THE CRASH OF SECURITY

district adjoining Shanghai International Settlement).

*March 11th.* Special Assembly declared that Members of the League must refuse to recognize any situation arising out of a breach of the Covenant or of the Kellogg Pact.

Assembly set up a Committee of 19 to watch events.

Japan declared Mr. Pu (formerly Emperor of China) President of Manchukuo, an 'independent' state under Japanese protection.

*May 5th.* With the help of the Committee of 19, an armistice arranged at Shanghai. War in the North continued.

*December.* Lytton Commission Report considered at Special Assembly. Committee of 19 to submit proposals.

### 1933

*January.* Japanese occupied Jehol and declared it a part of Manchukuo.

Committee of 19 made proposals which were refused by Japan.

*March 27th.* Japan left the League.

For one fortnight Britain imposed an embargo on the export of arms to both belligerents; no other Member having followed suit, the embargo was withdrawn.

*May 31st.* Armistice between China and Japan

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

signed at Tangku, establishing a demilitarized zone south of the Great Wall and controlled by Japan.

1935

After long and desultory fighting, the Chinese Government agreed to the setting up of an autonomous province of Peiping.

So, for the present, matters rest. No attempt was made to apply sanctions, nor were relations broken off between any of the Powers and Japan. The Lytton Report, accepted by the whole Assembly with the exception of Japan, was a compromise proposal, put forward with a view to a settlement. If ever the time comes when Japan is ready for negotiation, this report would be useful. But, as it was put forward for a specific situation it should not be considered as a legitimate starting point for further negotiations. It is a significant fact that Japanese aggression was stopped by the League only in the neighbourhood of Shanghai, where Europeans have many interests.

Against so powerful an enemy, so far off as Japan, only Powers with big navies, such as France, Britain and U.S.A., could have made any effectual contribution to naval sanctions. Possibly U.S.A. might have been prepared to go as far as Britain, but Britain was not prepared for actual war with Japan in defence of China or of the League, nor even

## THE CRASH OF SECURITY

for the imposition of economic sanctions. Europe has shown more than once that she will make war on the Far East for plunder or trade, but not for altruistic purposes. The sanctions clauses proved a dead letter and China could not rely on being 'defended' by the League. Those who never believed that she could, and who regard that form of defence as impracticable, cannot profess regret that it was not even tried. What they can and do most heartily regret is that the Covenant should have contained threats which were obviously empty and that the value of the League's judgment should have been prejudiced by these empty threats.

It is doubtful whether China ever had much faith in that form of Security. It is certain she can have none now.

European interest in the Manchurian filibuster died down about the middle of 1933, when matters nearer home were causing anxiety. The long-postponed Conference for the Limitation and Reduction of Armaments had begun in February 1932 at Geneva, under the Presidency of Mr. Arthur Henderson, who died in October 1935 without seeing any definite accomplishment. At first there were some sensational proposals: one after another, Russia, Italy and Germany declared themselves willing to disarm to any extent universally agreed on. Even if this were, in fact, bluff,

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

it is a thousand pities that some statesman was not found sufficiently daring and authoritative to call the bluff. A challenge of that sort, made the substance of a powerful nation's proposals and accompanied by intense popular propaganda at home might have had a startling effect on world-opinion. Armaments depend on policy and if such a proposal had been forcibly put by Britain or France and accompanied by an equally forcible declaration of peaceful policy towards all the Powers without exception, there would have been a good chance of some practical response. But rulers seem always willing to take risks for war and rarely indeed for peace, and the rulers in France and Britain were not exceptions. The hopeful move for a serious consideration of a scheme for the universal abolition of air forces and the internationalization of civil aviation was side-tracked in 1933 and Lord Londonderry two years later congratulated himself on having succeeded in retaining the air-arm for Britain — therefore for the world.

Whatever the Conference's declared objects were, it resolved itself into a conflict between Germany's fixed determination to free herself from the one-sided disarmament imposed upon her by Versailles and the equally fixed determination of France to maintain the artificial inequality between herself and her late enemy. Germany would have been

## THE CRASH OF SECURITY

satisfied by a scaling down of the armaments of the rest of Europe in proportion to hers, and this was the solution favoured by the British Labour Party and many societies working for peace. Germany actually offered to be content with an army of 300,000 and a moderate air-force; an offer rejected by M. Barthou.<sup>1</sup>

Events in Europe from 1932 to 1937 acted and reacted upon each other so markedly and swiftly that, in the following short diary, salient dates are noted concerning (1) the Disarmament Conference, (2) the successive repudiations of the Treaties of Versailles and Locarno and their effect on Franco-German relations; (3) the conquest of Ethiopia by Italy and the collapse of sanctions. Also the beginnings of a concerted effort to secure the non-intervention of foreigners in the Spanish civil war.

### 1932

*February.* Disarmament Conference started. Russia, Italy, Germany declared for any degree of disarmament, provided it were universal. U.S.A. proposed an all-round cut of one-third.

Herr Brüning announced that Germany could pay no more reparations.

*December.* Disarmament Conference granted Germany 'equality *in principle* within a system of Security'.

<sup>1</sup> *The Round Table*, June 1937, p. 491.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

1933

*January.* Herr Hitler became *Reichskanzler*, by election.

*March.* Finding no hope of concessions *in practice*, Germany left the Disarmament Conference and gave notice of her resignation of League Membership.

1934

*January.* Ten years' non-aggression pact between Germany and Poland signed.

Herr Hitler announced that Germany possessed an air-force and proposed to increase her navy — a violation of the Treaty of Versailles.

Germany accepted as a basis of discussion the British draft convention which was rejected by M. Barthou.

*August.* President Hindenberg died. Herr Hitler created Führer.

President Roosevelt declared U.S.A. must 'take the profit out of war'.

*September.* U.S.S.R. admitted to League membership.

Poland denounced the Minorities Treaty which she had accepted on her reconstitution in 1919; one-sided action.

*October.* M. Barthou assassinated at Marseilles.

## THE CRASH OF SECURITY

1935

*January.* U.S.S.R. reported to have an army of 900,000 men.

Saar plebiscite successfully held, under League auspices, with a neutral international armed guard which was welcomed by Herr Hitler.

Britain and France offered Germany an air-pact which Germany was prepared to discuss, but subsequently refused when she found it was proposed to include Russia.

M. Laval came to an agreement with Signor Mussolini giving Italy a free hand in Ethiopia in return for cessation of Italian plotting in Tunisia.

Italy began sending troops to Africa.

*March.* British White Paper announcing British rearmament and blaming Germany.

*13th.* France announced an increase of military service to two years.

*15th.* Germany announced one year's conscription and an army of 550,000 men — a violation of the Treaty of Versailles.

*May.* Lord Londonderry (Minister for Air) congratulated himself on having blocked the proposal at Geneva in 1933 to abolish air-forces.

Britain, France and Italy declared at Stresa that they would always consult each other on important international matters.



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

*June.* Mr. Baldwin became Prime Minister. Sir Samuel Hoare replaced Sir John Simon at the Foreign Office.

Anglo-German naval agreement broke the Stresa 'united Front'.

*September 11th.* Sir Samuel Hoare at Geneva declared that Britain would carry out her obligations (in regard to Ethiopia) in co-operation with her fellow-members.<sup>1</sup>

*15th.* Dispatch of British Home Fleet to the Mediterranean.

A Committee of the Council proposed a scheme of reforms in Ethiopia; the Emperor accepted; Italy refused.

*October 3rd.* Italy invaded Ethiopia and was declared by the League to be the aggressor. Limited economic sanctions agreed on.

*November.* Existing sanctions not having been successful in stopping the Ethiopian war, the stoppage of all oil imports and the closing of the Suez Canal were discussed. The League Committee gave to France and Britain the duty to make proposals. Mr. Roosevelt gave it to be

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Alexander Werth writes that there is a hitherto unpublished note by M. Laval, dated October 18th, 1935, in which he recalled that on September 9th, 'Sir Samuel Hoare had *spontaneously* informed him that *in no circumstances* would the British Government apply to Italy any sanctions other than financial and economic sanctions; *and that such measures as a naval blockade of Italy or the closing of the Suez Canal were out of the question.*'—*The Destiny of France*, p. 179.

## THE CRASH OF SECURITY

understood that he would not prohibit the export of oil to Italy at owners' risk.

*December 9.* Sir Samuel Hoare announced the proposals which he and M. Laval had decided to make. They were that Ethiopia should cede half her territory to Italy and allow control over the rest.

Italy and Ethiopia rejected the proposal. Sir Samuel Hoare resigned.

1936

*February 12th.* League Committee gave a report adverse to the infliction on Italy of an oil sanction.

*27th.* Franco-Soviet pact ratified.

*March 7th.* Germany denounced Locarno, giving the Franco-Soviet pact as justification, and occupied the Rhineland for the first time since 1918 with German troops — a violation of the Treaty of Versailles.

*17th.* At a League Council Meeting, Germany's repudiation of the Treaties of Versailles and Locarno were condemned, Italy taking part in the condemnation.

*April 2nd.* Herr Hitler proposed a Peace Conference. No notice was taken of the proposal.

Austria announced the introduction of conscription — a violation of the Treaty of St. Germain.

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

*15th.* Settlement at Montreux of the question of the Dardanelles, raised by Turkey.

*May 2nd.* The Ethiopian Emperor fled to Jibouti, and subsequently to Europe.

*June.* M. Léon Blum became French Prime Minister.

*July 18th.* A military rebellion broke out in Spain against a Left Government.

*August 6th.* Signor Mussolini announced his intention of raising an Ethiopian army of 150,000.

*August 6th.* Anglo-Egyptian Treaty concluded. British embargo on export of arms to Spain.

*24th.* Period of German conscription raised to two years.

*September.* France made a treaty with Syria, giving up the mandate.

*8th.* A Committee for Non-Intervention in Spain set up in London. To it belonged Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Italy and Portugal.

*November 14th.* Herr Hitler denounced the Waterways Clauses of the Treaty of Versailles.

*17th.* Germany entered into a pact with Japan.

*December 20th.* Spanish Government appealed to the League under Article 11 and was referred to the Non-Intervention Committee.

Italy and Germany recognized the Burgos government of rebels.

## THE CRASH OF SECURITY

26th. A British Consulate established in Addis Ababa.

1937

January 2nd. British-Italian agreement signed, declaring it was not the desire of either party 'to modify or see modified the *status quo* as regards national sovereignty of territory in the Mediterranean area'.

January 4th. News that 10,000 Italians had been sent to Spain.

11th. Herr Hitler assured the French Ambassador that Germany had no designs on Morocco or the integrity of Spanish possessions.

24th. Yugoslavia and Bulgaria signed a pact of 'perpetual friendship'.

It will be seen that Germany liberated herself by unilateral denunciation from sundry provisions of the Treaty of Versailles in six stages. The first was as long ago as 1932 when Chancellor Brüning announced that Germany could pay no more Reparations. The 'economic blizzard' was at its worst then and it seemed as if nobody cared what happened to the incubus of Reparations. Herr Hitler had not long been in power when he announced the existence of a German air-force and France countered in March 1935 by raising her period of conscription to two years, to be followed

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

almost immediately by Germany's announcement of one year's conscription. France's pact with Russia (reported, by the Information Department of Chatham House, to possess an army of 1,300,000 men and 3000 front-line aeroplanes) on February 27th, 1936, was answered by the denunciation of the Treaty of Locarno; Germany's argument being that France's new alliance upset the balance upon which Locarno was based. Germany declined altogether to enter into any sort of pact with Russia. Although theoretically the guarantors of Locarno were supposed to act impartially against either aggressor — be it Germany or be it France — there had been little in Germany's experience of the League to make her regard with equanimity the addition of so formidable a Power as Russia to the string of France's Allies. By increasing her period of conscription to two years in August 1936, Germany pulled up a little on France, but not long after M. Blum came into power he asserted, without contradiction, that France was the most highly armed State in Europe next to Russia. Therefore, with Russia as an ally in addition to Great Britain and the Little Entente, France could — if arms and men would do it — feel secure. But arms and men do not give security nor even the illusion of security.

Those who were most obsessed by the 'German

## THE CRASH OF SECURITY

peril' must have been astonished to find that, since the summer of 1936, the panic-centre had moved to the Mediterranean. The Spanish militarist rebellion focused many of the dangers that had been latent there as elsewhere. The whole of the north coast of Africa, the Straits of Gibraltar and the islands between Italy and Spain have been put in jeopardy by Signor Mussolini's ambition to found an Empire. One wonders how long he will be content to allow France to own the only port to which access can be had by rail from Ethiopia, and whether he will not wish to unite the two Italian possessions of Eritrea and Somaliland with Ethiopia, thus making a solid Italian block south of the Soudan. It is quite on the cards too that the annexation of Tunisia by Italy will appear so easy as scarcely to cause serious hesitation. The situation in Egypt has been cleared up none too soon by the treaty negotiated by Sir Miles Lampson. Remains Palestine, an ever-growing source of anxiety, a standing example of the Nemesis that awaits Governments which give irreconcilable promises.

The Fascist and Nazi revolutions differed in type from the more usual forms of warlike rebellion. They both took place after forms of democratic election, but they then proceeded to exterminate any opposition by a secret terror, individual killings and torturings and a formidable system of

## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

concentration camps. Spies, censorships and propaganda complete the totalitarian system, which seems to offer great advantages for the conducting of war. The U.S.S.R. combined both methods, beginning with mass killing and continuing with the less sensational forms of secret terrorism. The effect on the Russian population has been that, in 1937, it was estimated that half the people were under eighteen years of age and two-thirds were under twenty-five. The second great Russian post-war famine was in 1933, when five millions of men, women and children are reported to have starved to death because the peasants refused to grow more food than they needed for themselves and the Government seized the harvest as part of its collectivization plan, and left them to starve.

The persecution of the Jews, which is so marked and horrible a feature of Nazi administration, would seem not to be necessarily associated with a totalitarian system. For it does not exist in Russia nor in Italy and it is marked in Poland and Rumania which, though not free in the western sense, have not yet gone the whole way to dictatorship. Nationalism has in Italy gone so far as to assert a tribal system of political morality not apparently modified in the slightest by any Christianity still professed there. In Germany, Herr Hitler has attempted to justify his tribal morality by a fantastic

## THE CRASH OF SECURITY

theory of racial purity. To the pure (German) all things are pure. And yet — and yet — in his language he much more often betrays his belief in an ethic common to western Europe than does the more brutal Italian. With German thoroughness also, Herr Hitler is concerned to bring professed religion into line with Naziism. Not for him the subtlety of the devout nonconformist Welsh politician who, in a debate on the Treaty of Versailles, set the House in a roar of derisive laughter by asking, 'Does the Hon. Member then think we ought to say to Germany "Go and sin no more"?' The German cannot live comfortably with various water-tight compartments in his mind; it is a totalitarian mind.

The intensification of nationalism everywhere since the war has not left Russia unaffected. Partly as a consequence of Western interference during the early years of the revolution and of a long and obstinate boycott later; partly because of the pride and satisfaction at having made a system which — whether pure Communism or not — is working, the new Russia has shown herself as strongly convinced as Germany that she is in the right, and, like Germany, is anxious to propagate her gospel abroad. At the same time her rulers seem to be deliberately cultivating a nationalism which is foreign to Lenin's teaching.



## THE OBSESSION OF SECURITY

questions like non-intervention in Spain have perforce been referred to London. It seems probable that this state of things may continue, and the League grow progressively weaker, unless the great Powers will candidly face this problem of sanctions. It has been clotted with hypocrisy.

PART TWO

THE CREATION OF  
CONFIDENCE



## CHAPTER I

# OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

Three methods of attaining Collective Security — Alliances the oldest and worst — League of Nations principle of Pooled Security — United States of Europe — Aggression — Defence and Partial Pacts — Necessity of provision for peaceful change and disarmament — French insistence on Collective Security — What is Pacifism? — Partial Pacts the ruin of the League — Some reasons for the crash of Sanctions in the case of the conquest of Ethiopia — Sanctions tied up with the Balance of Power — Results of a League War the same as those of any other war — Sanctions can never be 'predictable' — Effect on armaments — Do people 'put defence first'? — The failure of the League to give Security is the result of lack of Confidence — The analogy of Police — The Saar International Force — Conditions now not according to predictions in 1918 — Two fundamental mistakes in the Covenant — Towards Federation of Europe

THE various methods tried and proposed for the attainment of Collective Security by force fall into three categories. First, there was the oldest of all forms of organized force, to be found in *Alliances of Sovereign States*, which did not profess to obey any law (except, erratically, laws of chivalry and so-called laws of war, which were not true laws at all) and which were formed and re-formed on a basis of supposed mutual interests and common fears.

Secondly there is *the League system*, the result of an

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

effort to replace this type of alliance by something based on ascertainable law, with rights and duties less fluctuating, more nearly universal; rights and duties some of which, only, were backed by compulsive force called sanctions, the rest remaining obligations of honour. There is nothing in the Covenant prohibiting or even discouraging any survival of the lawless system of alliances in the midst of a system of universal rights and duties, although President Wilson was very decided in condemning such survival of sectional preferences in 'the family of nations', and it should be clear to anyone that it must weaken, and if persistent and extensive, must destroy that system by breaking up its unity. The Members of the League, though they have, in theory, parted with a little of their sovereignty, to the extent of declaring their willingness not to be judges in their own disputes, and — an obligation rarely kept — to contribute to diplomatic and economic sanctions when required, still retain the essentials of sovereignty: complete rights over their own armed forces, the right to domestic legislation without interference, and the right to make treaties and alliances with other powers, so long as these are 'within the framework of the League', a cant phrase meaning not positively contrary to the letter of the League's law, although it may be contrary to the spirit of the Preamble to

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

the League's Covenant. The League is essentially a League of Sovereign States. It has no central government. It possesses no federal force.

Thirdly there is a system, as yet non-existent, which has for long been the dream of Utopias: 'the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world' or, more modestly, '*The United States of Europe*', or its more recent English development, 'The New Commonwealth'. The essentials of this system are that the central or federal government should have not only judicial but legislative powers and a federal force with which to defend these powers. It follows that the states members of this commonwealth would be permitted command of only so much force as was required to keep order domestically; would be obliged to submit to all decisions of the commonwealth judicature and legislature on matters within the competence of those bodies, and would be obliged to contribute their quota in materials and in human power to the federal force. They would cease to be sovereign states. Schemes vary in detail, especially in the degree of interference which should be admitted in what are now held to be matters of domestic concern, such as immigration, tariffs, control of waterways, racial discriminations, administration of colonies and treatment of minorities. There are various forms of this proposal, among them those made by M.

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

Briand, by Count Coudenhove-Kalergi and by Lord Davies, as well as a much more limited proposal to arm the existing League with an international air force coupled with the international control of civil aviation. There are considerable divergences of opinion about the scope of the duties of such an air force.

It is not necessary to enlarge upon the disadvantages of the first and oldest system. It never has and it never could have brought peace or security. Yet we have already seen, in previous chapters, that it has been allowed and even encouraged to spread through the League system and destroy its unity.

Coming then to this second, or *League of Nations* system, it is clear that the questions of offence and defence are among those of first importance. Some people, indeed, regard them as the only questions of importance for the League. I am very far indeed from thinking so, and the way in which attention has been focused on this negative aspect of the great peace problem has been disastrous to the League's growth, which has become lop-sided to the degree of deformity.

Nevertheless, in a world not such as we would wish to inhabit, but such as we do, in fact, inhabit, we are bound to consider what we can and what we ought to do if we were attacked or menaced by

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

attack. We are also bound to consider whether we have any duty to help, if we can without worsening the situation, other countries attacked or menaced by attack. It is rare to find anyone in this country who boldly proclaims that he would at the present day approve a British policy of conquest, although there were found apologists not a few, and in high places, for Japanese and Italian conquests and although the British Empire has been largely founded on conquest and has claimed a considerable portion of the spoils of the World War. We no longer wish to make conquests; we are a satiated Power; we defend our own — never ask us how we got it! Also, having won a predominant position in world councils we quietly, but decidedly, maintain it.

Even the Primate has said that all Christians are pacifists; this seems to me an exaggeration. For no wars have ever been waged with such atrocities and devastating consequences as those which professed Christians have waged against each other and are now preparing to wage with even greater scientific ferocity. Still — I know what he means! Nearly all Christians nowadays verbally reprobate aggression (except for purposes of civilization), and all Christian (as well as Pagan) states accepted the Kellogg Pact, undertaking not to use war 'as an instrument of national policy' — except, of course, a



## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

war of defence. As the Archbishop of York was reported by an Anglican correspondent to have said, at the spring session of the Assembly of the Anglican Church (February 5th, 1937), 'When we have law, then we can go on to the Gospel'; and was much applauded.

We only defend ourselves and our property (no matter how acquired) against aggression and we have not yet consented to any definition of aggression. The Geneva Protocol did work out a fairly watertight and rigid definition, based on ascertained facts; but to be sure of the facts is one of the great difficulties. The theory of the League is that the Members have what is called 'Collective Security': — in case of aggression, all the Members come to the assistance of the victim; the knowledge that this will be so mostly prevents aggression, but when aggression occurs, the pooled forces ensure defeat of the aggressor. How different from theory have been the facts! We have accepted and never repudiated, as Italy and Japan and others have, the jurisdiction of the League in one or another of its manifestations and organs, as to what, in any particular instance, constitutes aggression. The League may sometimes have no difficulty in declaring at once who is the aggressor; there was no doubt possible about the fact of Japanese aggression in Manchuria or Italian aggression in Ethiopia,

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

because in neither of these cases did the victims at first retaliate. But it might take the League a much longer time to decide which of two or more fleets of bombing planes first crossed the frontiers of the states owning them, or first started over the ocean dividing the belligerents. An absurd stunt by an Austrian official airman who, about the middle of February 1937, succeeded in persuading many Austrian and German journalists and other observers that he was a Bolshevik propagandist scrawling a hammer and sickle over the Vienna sky, showed how easy it is to delude people into seeing what they fear to see. Who would be competent to say which of the aviators who bombed Spain — Italian, German, French or Russian — during the 1936-1937 civil war was the first to start? Germans would see Russians; Russians would see Italians; Italians would see French; French would see Germans.

If, then, it will be so difficult and possibly so tedious a task for the League to declare the aggressor, is it not certain that the victim cannot afford to wait? 'Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just, But four times he who gets his blow in fust.' Between two closely matched opponents with modern weapons, time would be of the very first importance and this is why there crept into the Treaty of Locarno that curious provision that help should be given to the Power attacked 'as soon as

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

the said Power has been able to satisfy *itself* that this violation constitutes an unprovoked act of aggression'. Provision analogous to this is made in the Franco-Soviet treaty of 1936. Action alleged to be defensive is, therefore, permitted before the League has given its decision that it is in truth defensive. In a day when attack is declared to be the only defence, the situation looks like one in Looking-Glass Land. Judgment is executed before it has been pronounced. And what is 'provocation'? And how trust any Power with a land frontier to satisfy others (even if it has satisfied itself, which is easy) that it has not 'provoked' the other Power?

It is common to hear people talk as if the crossing of a frontier were the only relevant test of warlike intent. But mobilization may be a serious provocation and national policy may often not have reached the ultimate arbitrament of war and yet be essentially warlike, in the sense of being compulsive and war-provoking. War, as a latent threat, may be an 'instrument of national policy'. In fact, the existence of that threat is what makes a Power 'great' and gives it a permanent seat on the Council. The diplomat who has the solid backing of a preponderant army, navy and air force, finds that Peace hath her victories no less renowned than War, in a sense scarcely intended by Milton. Nevertheless such victories give but a precarious

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

peace, depending, as they do, on a shifting balance of power, and they contribute nothing to the building up of confidence, without which there can be no security in the development of peace, nor even in the successful waging of collective war; because these methods of power diplomacy, essentially war methods, always leave a sense of grievance among those who have been defeated, and a determination to go one better next time. In Erewhon, it would be obvious that only disarmed states should be qualified to be permanent Members of the Council.

The undertaking to use force even to the extreme of war of all arms, with all the ghastly consequences decently veiled under the name of Sanctions, is implicit in Articles 10, 16 and 17 of the Covenant (described in Part One, Chapter II). How is this use of force justified? No one has put the case better and more simply than Mr. W. Arnold Forster in many lucid speeches and writings. Taking a pamphlet by him entitled *Sanctions* (League of Nations Union) we find him advocating the provision of them on the ground that they constitute a realistic choice 'between the better and the worse of the courses actually open to us'. They are not ideal, but they are steps towards the ideal of peace.

With a candour rare among people who hold strong convictions not always in consonance with their desires, but to which their honest thought has

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

forced them, Mr. Arnold Forster lays down certain reasons for the establishment of sanctions and certain conditions for the due working of Collective Security. They are worth examining.

1. 'There must be *obligations not to go to war*, generally and sincerely accepted.' The first comment I would make on this is that I should wish to transfer the italics to the two last words. Experience seems to show that the difficulty is not in getting the obligation generally, indeed universally accepted, but sincerity has been rare, even among some who have not actually waged a war of aggression.

2. 'There must be provision for peaceful change of the existing rights of states.' Nothing more necessary than this. But, except for the vague scope offered in Articles 11 and 19, there is no actual provision in the Covenant for change and it is sad to have to record that the legalistic and coercive Articles have received all the attention of Members to the exclusion of the reforming Articles; these have been left undeveloped and unimplemented. The Great Powers have sat tight on their existing rights and it is as much as a small Power's place is worth to raise the question of peaceful change. Except in the revisions of the Mandates for 'Iraq and Syria, which were a condition in the establishment of those mandates, I can think of no important peaceful changes in the existing rights of states,

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

negotiated by the League. There have been many changes, some by force and some agreed outside the League, such as the revision of the Treaty of Sèvres (the 'porcelain treaty' revised at Lausanne), the Anglo-Egyptian treaty, the Dardanelles agreement, the reconciliation between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria; but the relevant articles of the Covenant have not been invoked for such changes, even when they were in the highest degree desirable. Changes have even been repeatedly made by the illegal method of unilateral denunciation, when hope deferred made the heart sick — of the League. Such changes as Herr Hitler made when he introduced conscription and an air force and reassumed control of the Rhineland after Germany had been granted 'equality in principle'; or as Poland made, when she denounced the Minorities Treaty which was one of the conditions of her re-establishment as a Sovereign Power, by the Allies; or as Austria made when she reintroduced conscription, forbidden at St. Germain.

Mr. Lloyd George has complained bitterly of the neglect by Members of Article 19, by which all the mistakes (and he admits only a few) of the Treaties could have been rectified. The Treaties, he maintains, were on the whole good treaties, and their evil consequences due mainly to mal-administration. Moreover, there was Article 19,

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

designed for their peaceful revision, and no doubt Penelope-George would have been happily occupied had he been in power, in unpicking every year the web he had helped to weave so disastrously strangling Europe in 1919. But how rare is the peaceful revision of any treaty giving great privileges to one party over another! And how long the imposition of sanctions would be postponed if it waited upon such revision!

Far from the League being assiduous in remedying grievances and so forestalling the outbreak of exasperation on the part of those who have felt wronged, the order of events has been for the Great Powers to resist attempts to bring grievances to the League, and if they were brought, to induce the League to shelve any decision on them for as long as might be. The result has been a continual state of tension likely to lead to the eventual explosion of war. That war, League or other, is the very worst possible solution of any wrong does not weigh with either the militarist or the sanctionist.

I have heard Professor Murray explain, to the great contentment of an English audience, 'the League says that no State may go to war'. When asked what a State should do, if it felt a grievance to be intolerable, he replied cheerfully, 'Bring it to the League. There is provision in the Covenant for considering all such cases'. But when I heard him

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

say that, about 1922, there was not even that. The League was for years categorically estopped from remedying the grievances of the vanquished against the victors.

Alarmed at the damaged condition of the League, some ardent sanctionists are at last making an effort to redress the balance of positive and negative in the League's constitution and to make popular propaganda for a policy of co-operation and reform side by side with a policy of judgment and punitive alliances. It will not do. The punitive alliances will corrupt the judgments, either directly, or by convincing the states against which they are directed that they mean mischief. Confidence must be won before judgment will be accepted; before even gifts will be accepted as anything better than bribes.

3. 'There must certainly be all-round disarmament.' Well! . . .

4. 'The French and many of the other original signatories of the Covenant would not have signed it if the sanctions had been omitted.' Perfectly true and a sign of the times. But that is no reason for not earnestly seeking to find out how it is that sanctions have utterly failed and for not admitting that the fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves. Sanctions, or threats of sanctions, have worked against a weak state that has had no powerful state



## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

as a protector; but that is nothing new. If, before the war, the powerful states did not want weak states to go to war, they were able, if united, to prevent them; sometimes, if disunited, they allowed or encouraged them to go to war, in the hope of reaping some benefit. It used to be the fashion to keep a pet Balkan.

All Europe was for years after the War trailed at the heels of France, first under M. Clemenceau and then under M. Poincaré. Even the late M. Barthou was able to persuade the League that a contingent from the French army would be suitable for policing the Saar plebiscite and it was only because his successor was wiser than he that the international force which was eventually sent there was such a civilized success and exhibited the fundamental difference between police functions and war functions. It may have been impossible to resist France in her shell-shocked condition at Versailles and later, but the consequences were in the highest degree disastrous and should not be allowed to impose a permanent embargo on liberal developments.

5. 'If the principle of "Collective Security" were abandoned and sanctions were cut out of the Covenant, the League would crumble to pieces, deserted by the bulk of its Members.' This need not trouble us, for the Covenant can be amended only

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

when amendments have been ratified by 'the Members of the League whose representatives compose the Council and by a majority of the Members of the League whose representatives compose the Assembly'. A far greater danger is that the League may crumble from the internal rot caused by professing principles which are not put into practice or by using its machinery for purposes contrary to those of the Preamble to the Covenant.

6. Mr. Arnold Forster enumerates the classes of people opposed to sanctions. I cannot find myself at home in any of these classes which seem to be those selected for answering, and indeed I have found that none of the most eloquent sanctionists, such as Lord Cecil, Professor Murray, or Sir Norman Angell, ever meet my objection. Mr. Arnold Forster's list is composed of (i) *Isolationists*; but I am all for international co-operation; for good, not for evil; for peace, not for war. (ii) *Absolutists*; but I am not against all resistance, provided it is resistance not leading to war. (iii) *Militarists*, by which, I presume, he means nationalist militarists; but I am not in that company, though it would perhaps not be unfair to call sanctionists international militarists, for they believe in war as a measure of defence. (iv) *Left-Wing Socialists*; presumably because they object to a 'capitalist League' altogether; but I have always thought it a good thing

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

to have a League composed of whatever governments there are, provided they will make an honest endeavour to practise the principles they profess. Since the U.S.S.R. joined the League the British Left has become strongly sanctionist. They can truly say 'When Father turns we all turn'.

*My objection to sanctions is that they are fundamentally unworkable according to their professed intentions, but capable of being twisted to sinister purposes.*

The name *Pacifist* is quite appropriate to those whose objection to sanctions is of this order and I ask for no better name. We want to make peace, not war. We want a League that will try only to make peace. We don't believe in war to end war. Some of us never did. Some were disenchanted by the War, or later by the Peace, or later still by the crash of sanctions. They are joining the ranks of Pacifists, unless they are of that unhappy type which can learn nothing from disenchantments except depression and despair.

7. 'But obviously the action taken must be collective; it must be supported loyally and effectively by many states, and those states must between them command such a preponderance of power over the Covenant-breaking state (or states) as to ensure successful restraint. It would not be an ordinary defeat but a shattering disaster for the League's whole enterprise if the League, after

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

having begun to apply sanctions, were to fail to make them effective.' This could not be bettered as a statement of fact, and the crashing of sanctions, even to those who never believed in them, *was* a shattering disaster. A measure of that disaster is the refusal of the League to intervene to negotiate collective neutrality in the civil war in Spain and the handing over of this essentially League subject to a Committee sitting in London. Perhaps, having driven Germany out, the League could do no other, since Germany is one of the Powers so horribly rehearsing war in Spain, at the expense of Spanish people.

I have said that it would be difficult to find any thoughtful person who would defend the old system of alliances as the best possible. Yet most of those who approve of the sanctions clauses of the Covenant will tell you that 'regional agreements' or 'partial pacts' are an essential part of the whole system. They explain that as every Member cannot be expected to fight in defence of the Covenant everywhere in Europe (to say nothing of the rest of the world) it is necessary that Members should draw together in groups, pledged to common action and developing its potentialities by the organization of pre-arranged plans of campaign. (This is M. Paul Boncour's favourite theme.) They overlook the fact that plans of campaign are not evolved against

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

an imaginary foe. They must be devised against a specific Power or Powers. As those specific Powers become aware of this preparation, they inevitably prepare against it on their side and we find what is, in fact, a reversion to the old system of alliances under the polite fiction of 'regional agreements in support of the Covenant'. The fiction becomes threadbare in the case of the 'regional' Franco-Russian pact. The League is beautifully broken up by endless military confabulations of its Members in twos and threes, with all the partisanship and misrepresentation on all sides that accompany such confabulations. The obligations of a Member to one of his Allies become more sacred than his obligations to the League. He will not exercise his 'friendly right' under Article 11, lest his ally should declare it to be unfriendly.

We should be on our guard against a specious use of the League for the purpose of rallying support from many sides in this country. We have undoubtedly drifted back to the pre-War system of alliances, and although the strategical reasons which dictated these alliances are now largely modified by new developments, it is still claimed that the coasts of Belgium and France must be in the hands of our Allies. Not enough that they should be in the hands of our friends; there must be undertakings

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

similar to those that existed in 1914. This is not a question of rights and wrongs; we shall defend France and Belgium in any war, League or no League. But while this is the strategic (and therefore operative) reason for our constant support of France, our governments have had enough ingenuity to persuade the great mass of our people that our motives are quite other than they are. Now that Russia has very astutely joined the League, the British Labour Party, naturally detesting Nazi rule, has swung over to the extreme sanctionist standpoint, in remarkable contrast to its early indifference to the League. Germany having been driven out of the League, temperamental anti-Germans are able to rationalize their emotions by regarding Germany as the peace-breaker of Europe, although she is the only Great Power who has not broken the peace anywhere. All the conditions are prepared for an anti-German drive, should a government desiring one come into power in this country.

The results of the Pact system were seen in the case of Ethiopia, which was a weak state left out in the cold of the general League guarantee while other states were kept warm with alliances. France had a number of allies, but Ethiopia was not among them, and France's general loyalty to the League was not in the same category with her loyalty to an ally. France wished to conciliate Italy as the price of her

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

security in Tunisia and elsewhere. Britain was unwilling to disoblige her ally, France; she was also unwilling to bear the whole responsibility of incurring Italy's wrath in the Mediterranean, not for any special British interests but 'in defence of the Covenant'. That it was probably greatly to the disadvantage of Britain that a powerful European state with the established policy of Fascist Italy should replace a weak African one and thus command some of the sources of the Nile, did not seem to weigh with the British Government against its overwhelming fear of a Mediterranean conflict in which we could, it would seem, have relied on no support.

This seems to have been the true reason of Sir Samuel Hoare's consent to what were known as the 'Hoare-Laval proposals' of December 1935, which knocked the bottom out of sanctions. His *apologia* in the House was full of phrases like 'I was obsessed by', and 'I was in terror lest' . . . He could not face the position if the British fleet alone had to bear the brunt of closing the Suez canal to Italian ships, or of supporting the oil sanction by stopping American supplies; for it must be remembered that President Roosevelt did not forbid the export of oil to Italy 'at owners' risk'. Sir Norman Angell, in a message from America at the time, admitted that this might entail a naval war between Italy and Britain in the

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

Mediterranean, but he thought we ought to take the risk. As for closing the Suez canal, there are people who talk of this as if it were as simple as locking one's back door.

'We could easily,' I have heard, 'have closed the Canal by sinking a war-ship at the entrance'. This sort of remark is an example of the simplified view alluded to in my Introduction; a view no government can afford to take. We do not own the Suez Canal as a man owns his house. Egypt has her point of view. The majority of shareholders in the Suez Canal Company are French; they would not be pleased by high-handed action on the part of the British navy; the French government must listen to them and we must listen to the French government. It is necessary to listen to one's allies and those who urged some such heroic policy as closing the Canal have been ardent supporters of a Franco-British alliance. They have also been among the advocates of a still further one-sided reduction of British armaments. There is an irresponsible lack of co-ordination in the various proposals of such sanctionists. If the French alliance is to hold, we must not flout France; if we are expected single-handedly to provide naval sanctions, even the astronomical figures mentioned in our rearmament plan will not suffice.

I am one of those who object to any military



## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

alliance, with France or any other. I also object to any sanctions and I believe that the cause of peace would be advanced by our abandonment of these policies, so that, if this abandonment were combined by a policy of conciliation, we might be able to reduce rather than increase our armaments. But if we insist on pursuing a policy of sanctions in Europe as it now is, we must re-arm.

At the time of the Ethiopian war Britain had not even come to an agreement with Egypt. There was the brooding danger of Arab dissatisfaction in Palestine breaking out in a conflagration which might unite Arabs elsewhere than in Palestine. The Admiralty estimated that the Mediterranean Fleet would not suffice for the work, but that large contingents would have to be withdrawn from other stations besides the Home Fleet, leaving all these stations unprotected in an emergency. There was furthermore the proved peril of the bombardment of capital ships by a swarm of Italian aircraft.

What sanctionists will not realize is that the theory of sanctions ties the whole League up to the Balance of Power. Unless there is every probability that this balance is very heavily indeed on the side of the League, sanctions become impossible and all this talk of the impossible gravely prejudices the possible. 'But surely *if* all the States Members are united in resisting the aggressor, not only could they

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

successfully resist aggression but they could prevent its occurring!' Yes, if! And the very sanctionist who says that, also gives his blessing to Partial Treaties or Regional Pacts which break up the League.

These pacts are, in reality, little removed from the old lawless alliances, even though they are described as being 'within the framework of the League'. For if you have neither proved aggression before an impartial court, nor even defined aggression, how can you claim that your alleged defence against the alleged aggression is 'lawful'? What sort of law is that?

But then, the pact-apologist says, these pacts are, or should be, 'open to all'. If they were not only open to all, but entered by all, they would no longer be partial or regional. As it is, the very way in which they are concluded, secretly and between selected partners, at once makes them suspect to the excluded, who are invited to walk into the parlour after it has been completely furnished by the original two or three.

Another illusion, which was very prevalent in regard to Locarno, was that its common guarantee made it a new thing very superior to any other treaty. The guarantor Powers guaranteed Germany against French aggression as well as France against German aggression. But the demilitarized zone was

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

still only east of the Maginot line, after the Treaty as before; but, if indeed guarantees are useless unless accompanied by 'detailed plans' against aggression, are we to believe that the guarantors made detailed plans with Germany as well as with France? And that these plans were all open to inspection by both guaranteed Powers? To ask such absurd questions is to answer them.

It should have always been obvious that Sanctions tied the League up to a Balance of Power and in so far as physical force was made the test of the League, moral force and, with it, confidence was damaged. The Balance of Power is indeed a precarious foundation and the Society of Nations was lauded as a substitute; yet who dare say that, after nearly seventeen years of the League, the Balance is not still the chief concern of Great Powers and one of the greatest obstacles to co-operation? What has the League, as a League, done to overcome that evil? What *could* the League do, while Sanctions were there to hinder? So long as the League claims the temporal power of armed force, so long will her spiritual power be diminished and endangered by this claim. The League must 'keep in' with its disloyal members, lest force should be invoked. But what use are disloyal Members to a League that may have to go to war?

8. 'It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that,

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

if sanctions do have to be used, we should be most scrupulously on guard against their abuse. The coercion ought to be used, if used at all, not to impose a victor's terms, or to punish or destroy the peace-breaker, but solely to stop the peace-breaking quickly and with *the minimum of lasting injury.*' In fact, nations ought to go to war with incendiary bombs and vesicants and poison gas, in the spirit of a loving father chastising his errant child. I hear again the reassuring speeches of Mr. Asquith at the beginning of the War. I remember the devastating torrent of lies let loose in all the warring states, as they always are and always must be, in war. I remember the mutilating of minds which caused every consideration to be ignored, if it were thought to hinder in the least the attainment of what had become, inevitably, the great one purpose: To Win the War. 'At all costs'!

Add any number of zeros together and the result will still be zero. If the Members collected together for sanctions are moved by nationalist motives, the result will not be peace and justice but merely another nationalist settlement. Who can say, with memory of the League during its first seventeen years, that its Members are no longer moved by nationalist motives? Who can believe that there would not be a fresh crop of secret treaties?

Few utterances of men in agonized perplexity have

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

been more moving than these words of President Wilson, when he, even if mistaken, believed that the war into which he was leading America was a holy war. His belief was as honest and fervent as any that could be felt by a League sanctionist. Colonel House reports him thus:

America's entrance . . . would mean that we should lose our heads along with the rest and stop weighing right or wrong. It would mean that a majority of people in this hemisphere would go war-mad, quit thinking, and devote their energies to destruction . . . It means an attempt to reconstruct a peace-time civilization with war standards, and at the end of the war there will be no bystanders with sufficient power to influence the terms. There won't be any peace standards left to work with. There will be only war-standards . . . Once lead this people into war and they'll forget there ever was such a thing as tolerance. If there's any alternative, for God's sake, let's take it.

And out of this hideous moral anarchy of a holy war is to emerge — what? 'Fourteen points' and then — Treaties of Versailles, St. Germain, Sèvres and their like. That is to say, at best, there would be unjust treaties, to be subsequently broken. At worst there would be — black night; dark ages.

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

9. 'The sanctions must be certain: they must be *predictable*.' This was published in November 1935; that is to say after Sir Samuel Hoare's bold speech at Geneva and before the Hoare-Laval proposals three months later. We may find in the contrast between these two events many of the reasons why the issue of sanctions against a Great Power (or a Power protected by Great Powers) can never be predictable. There is the time-factor. There is the relative preponderance of armaments. There is the certainty or uncertainty of military alliances. Very important indeed is the fact that the aggressor has probably chosen his time, whereas the Members of the League who were not immediately concerned might have a score of domestic and foreign affairs which would make it impossible for them to intervene 'effectively', even if they were so imprudent as to intervene 'loyally'. They might be in the middle of some constitutional crisis. A revolution might be impending, and revolutionary emissaries only waiting for the war which was to be the signal of revolution. The state of France might have alarmed a man of sounder nerve than M. Laval in 1935-6. They might be temporarily at a military or naval disadvantage. They might be called upon to break again an agreement which had taken years of patient diplomacy to bring off. They might be burdened with unpayable

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

debts, or anxious about their possessions in far-off colonies and dependencies. Above all, and far beyond all, they might feel that in a Europe so horribly lacking in confidence, they might, by their intervention, be touching off the train of war-mentality which has never yet been removed since 1914. Or, to change the metaphor, instead of making a sanitary cordon round the source of infection, they would actually be cultivating the virus and preparing its hosts.

10. 'It is plain that the States co-operating "to protect the covenants of the League"' (but why, incidentally one may ask, protect only *selected* covenants of the League? Why not all?) 'must have on their side, collectively, a much greater power than that on the side of the covenant-breaker. That has an obvious bearing on the reduction of armaments. It implies that, with Japan and Germany outside the League (and Italy now challenging the League) the League's supporters must collectively retain a sufficient superiority of power to be able to resist all acts of aggression: the reduction of armaments will have to be timed and co-ordinated so as to allow for this.'

No better statement could be made of the effect of the Balance of Power on armaments. The queer thing is that all those years when Germany was in the League and never broke or threatened to break

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

the Covenant, the other Members did not say, 'if Powers outside the League will not disarm, Powers inside the League must remain armed, and Germany, a League Member, must be empowered to rearm proportionately, so that the League may "collectively retain a sufficient superiority of power" '. No. They drove Germany out, to rearm outside the League. And now the fright that Sir Samuel Hoare had over the possibility of naval sanctions in the Mediterranean in 1935 has driven the British Government to its stupendous rearmament scheme. Oh, Collective Security! What crimes are committed in thy name!

The Balance of Power in Europe is being assimilated in many respects to its position in 1914. On the whole the Balance is a good deal more favourable to the Allies (for they are now once more admittedly allies) than it was then. Russia has abandoned her flirtation with Germany, and is incomparably more powerful than Tsarist Russia was. Austria-Hungary is scattered into seven parts, of which Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Poland may be reckoned on the side of the Allies; Austria helpless; Hungary inclined to be hostile but equally helpless. Only Italy, as in 1914, straddles with one foot in each scale, ready to come down where she thinks her interests lie. It is not easy to be sure where that will be. Probably her African ambitions will decide.



## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

But this does not prevent writers and speakers from suggesting that the Balance is between ins and outs of the League; unless indeed, with still greater inaccuracy, they call it one of Democracies versus Totalitarians. Meanwhile, Italy remains and is even courted as a Member of the League.

Sir Norman Angell starts with his usual disarming declaration that, as for himself, he believes that one-sided disarmament and passive resistance are not only ideal but would be practicable, if people would think them so. He proceeds, regretfully, to admit that people do not, in sufficient numbers, think them so. 'States and peoples do not put peace as their first objective; *they put national defence as their first objective*, placing defence above peace'. From this premise he argues that defence should be secured by pooling the forces of those who have accepted (he says nothing about those whose acceptance is from the lips only) the obligations of the Covenant. Sanctions then, would become, not war, but putting pooled forces 'behind the Law', instead of 'behind the Litigant'.

The whole of his argument is based on the supposed necessity of accepting the fact that 'states and people put national defence as their first objective'. This seems to me extravagantly wide of the mark. We are all aware that official orators and writers of leading articles habitually say that *their* country's

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

first objective is defence. But if this were true of all of them, if all they desired were the defence of their frontiers, they would have no more to do than to stay within them.

‘Ah, but there are some states that are aggressive and we must be prepared against them.’ So, after all, not every state puts national defence as its first objective. What do they put first? Why, satiated states desire to hold the supposed advantages, colonies and concessions which they have won by conquest, or fortune, or diplomacy, or purchase from helpless savages, and *they* call preparations to hold these by the innocent-sounding name of defence (or Security). Defeated states desire to be no longer dictated to; they desire to recover some of what was taken from them and perhaps win something more, so as to even-up successes: if they cannot peacefully recover what was taken from them, they prepare for this ‘just recovery and reparation’, which *they* call defence. States in economic or political difficulties hope to better their position by military success; they must ‘expand or explode’, so this is what *they* call defence. All states wish to avoid being dominated and many states wish to have a share in the domination of others. Domination is not defence, but who are we, to say so? Do we not desire to maintain our prestige? And what is prestige but the power to dominate?

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

Who are these aggressive states? In truth it would be hard to find in Europe any state which did not come into one or other of these categories, except perhaps the Finns and Balts (and if the European waters were very troubled, might not even Lithuania fish for Vilna?); the Scandinavians and Danes, who used to be among the most war-like peoples of Europe; the Dutch, provided no one wanted Insulinde; Belgium, if no one wanted her colonies; Switzerland, who cries 'a plague on all your houses'! A handful indeed.

Sanctionists would seem to be saying to the rulers of the world, 'We take you at your word. You say you desire defence; the defence of your frontiers; Security. And you will not consent to obtaining it by the simple and obvious method of staying within your frontiers: of agreeing to the Kellogg Pact and *keeping that agreement*. Now, therefore, since you will not keep that agreement *not* to use war as an instrument of *national* policy, we invite you to make a much more difficult agreement to *use* war as an instrument of *international* policy'. And then they go about asking us to believe that this much more difficult and very dangerous, but altruistic agreement will be kept. In fact, in their more lyrical moments, they suggest that sanctions may never be called for, because it will be obvious to any aggressor that he will have no chance against the massed

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

Powers of the League. This is, of course, if the Powers *are* massed.

There was some cleverness in the attempt to harness two common proclivities of mankind to a system of so-called international law. Those who made the Covenant thought to use man's love of fighting and man's love of sitting in judgment on his fellows in the cause of peace. But it was a shallow cleverness after all. Peace is not to be made that way. 'For this reason', says Meredith, 'so many fall from God, that they cling to Him with their weakness, not with their strength.' Not out of our faults will peace come, but out of our virtues.

We are asked to believe that the 'set-back' of Manchuria and Ethiopia was only — as a correspondent of mine put it — 'momentary'. This is not so. The League has never had the confidence even of its own Members. Over and over again Members have shirked their duty because they were afraid a decision might lead to a demand for sanctions. Rarely indeed has the League had the nerve to stand up to its powerful Members. Over and over again, at the Extraordinary Assembly, on the Mandates Commission and elsewhere, only the little states stood for principle. If one is cynically minded, one may say that this was so because they were irresponsible. The bluff of sanctions held only so long as it was not called. When it was called, it revealed

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

the deep-seated weakness of the League: the nationalist spirit which informed these Sovereign States and paralysed them for combined action in any but a nationalist cause. Blame is out of place here, for they only refrained from doing what they had not the power to do. The only blame that does attach is for playing this ignominious game of bluff, for misleading China and Ethiopia into thinking they were going to receive help; in the case of the latter, at any rate, for prolonging a vain resistance. There can be no question of the grave damage that all this has done to the League, and we who do not believe in sanctions were as remorseful as the sanctionists for what was done in our name.

This investigation into the meaning and consequences of sanctions cannot omit a reference to a very prevalent and totally misleading analogy much in favour with popular lecturers on sanctions. They reassure their audiences by calling the composite international army 'Police' and by ignoring all the atrocious consequences of a League war, which would, in respect of methods, whatever the ostensible aims, not differ from any other sort of war. It could not afford any concessions to the humanitarian, for the result might be defeat. There have even been commentators so disingenuous (or perhaps so muddle-headed) as to claim that the noble success of the International Force which supplemented the

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

local police in the Saar during the plebiscite of January 1935 was a shining example of the good that would result from the establishment of a permanent League force, among whose duties it would be to wage a League war when called upon by the Council.

Now, the central idea of those who advocate a permanent League force, whether of all arms (air, sea and land) or only of air, is that this force should be available to apply sanctions, i.e. to wage war, in combination with one or other of the belligerents, in the name of a group of states (Members) against an offender. The function of the Saar International Force (composed of neutrals only) was, *with the cordial approval of Germany as well as France*, to assist the Saar police to keep order if called upon by that police. *Their function was not to fight another army, for there was no other army to fight.* If they had been called upon for force, it would have been against individuals only, or a mob of individuals. Germany, not having any force in the Saar, was a consenting and indeed a welcoming party to the arrangement, which passed off peacefully, the Swedish, Dutch, Italian and British troops never having to be called out; this might very likely not have been the case if M. Barthou's plan for exasperating German feeling by importing troops from France (an interested party) had been carried out. It was most discreditable to the League that this plan was not ruled out

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

at once and only lapsed because M. Flandin succeeded M. Barthou. When the plebiscite was over, Herr Hitler, in a broadcast speech, thanked the Powers who had 'helped France and ourselves by guaranteeing order during the plebiscite'. Sad to record that in the following September an English daily of very high standing actually asserted that the Saar International Army had had 'the double purpose of preventing a Nazi insurrection in the Saar territory and of *defending that territory from being invaded by the Saar legion trained on German soil*'.

Let us consider some of the most obvious differences between a true police and a League army equipped and intended for war, 'if necessary', as the saying goes; a foolish saying, for, if it were 'necessary', we should not be arguing about it.

### *Police Force*

1. Checks those who break a universally agreed law, and, if necessary, takes them into custody.

2. Acts only when the offender is found *in flagrante delicto*, or on a warrant, which can be quickly obtained.

3. Is a slenderly armed force, well-organized and loyal, dealing with individuals with no national backing and entirely unorganized.

### *International Force*

1. Could not appeal to universally agreed law and could not take a 'criminal nation' into custody. It could only massacre its inhabitants.

2. Could not act except after proof of aggression, which would cause dangerous delay.

3. Is a fully armed force, imperfectly organized, fighting another fully armed and organized force backed by patriotism.

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

### *Police Force*

4. Does not itself punish the alleged criminal.

5. Is required to cultivate a mild and tolerant temper in itself and the public.

6. Has no arms (in Britain) except a whistle and a truncheon and this latter it is required not to use except for necessity.

7. When it has arrested its man and handed him over to custody, even the small amount of force it has had to use ceases.

8. Operates in a country whose inhabitants are on its side.

### *International Force*

4. Would itself carry out the punishment, and this would be indiscriminating, impossible to graduate, or adapt.

5. Would find much of its work impossible, unless it roused among the soldiers a ferocity unfamiliar to most of them as civilians; and among civilians a spirit of hatred and vengeance.

6. The nature of the arms would have to be the most modern and destructive yet known and they would have to be used with the utmost brutality for invasion of enemy territory as well as for the repelling of attack.

7. When it has started on its war, God knows when and after what holocaust of the innocent and the precious, what devastation of beauty and utility, of friendship and commerce and sanity that war would be concluded.

8. Would be compelled to operate in a country whose inhabitants were bitterly hostile.



## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

### *Police Force.*

9. Does not depend upon extensive lying.

10. Is under the orders of a selected body of men (a municipality) chosen for their public character.

11. Operates in an environment favourable to law.

### *International Force.*

9. Would find in lies one of its chief weapons.

10. Is under the orders of men (governments) who, *ex-hypothesi*, are potential criminals, and in some cases have been declared criminals.

11. Would have to operate in an environment where 'sacred egoism' is still the moral law of nations.

Perhaps most important of all:

12. Is under the jurisdiction of one sovereign state acting for and responsible to its own nationals.

12. Would be under the jurisdiction of as many states as contributed to the force, and these states, though responsible to their own nationals, would be subject (more or less) to the decisions of an international authority.

In so far as police conditions differ from those mentioned, as when the police are more heavily armed or have increased powers of killing at sight, or where they are opposed by considerable numbers of the populace, armed and organized, the conditions approximate to civil war and the military arm is called out.

It is disingenuous of lecturers, whose superior knowledge of institutions must make them aware of these fundamental differences between police and

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

military functions, to continue using this analogy to reassure popular audiences and cause them gravely to underestimate the danger and the evil of international war sanctions. In truth, figurative language and false analogies are very apt to ensnare us and hamper clear thinking. There is no such thing, for instance, as a criminal nation; there are criminal individuals against whom police measures may be both necessary and practicable. Police measures are not practicable against a nation, which is composed largely of decent citizens, whom war welds into a whole with the few criminals to resist the foreign army.

When the Covenant was made and adopted in the first instance by the victors in the war, the situation was difficult enough, but the course of policies and events since then has, as the preceding chapters have attempted to show, made it very much more unfavourable to harmonious working. It was assumed in 1919 that the United States would be one of the Great Powers with a permanent seat on the Council; that a serious effort would be made to lower tariffs all over the world; most important of all was the prospect of the voluntary disarmament of the victors to match the enforced disarmament of the vanquished. Democracy was to spread over Europe.

Nothing of all this happened. The United States turned her back on Europe, whose desperate

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

economic situation was exasperated by war-debts and indemnities and tariffs. Germany was excluded from the League for years and then peremptorily ordered to come in, to find that all the equality she was likely to be offered with a good grace was 'in principle' only. It is difficult to say which was for years the stronger reason for Russia's isolation: the loathing which Members felt for Bolshevism or the contempt of the U.S.S.R. for the League. But, as Germany went out, Russia came in. Whether the continued presence of Italy as a Permanent Member of the Council makes for unity within the League, it is hard to say. There is no little indecency in the sight of a delegate from Italy — in the fourteenth month of a cruel war against a fellow-Member of the League, and within two months of victory and annexation; Italy, solemnly declared the aggressor with the approval of all the world; Italy which had broken the Covenant and the Pact of Paris — a delegate from that Italy sitting in solemn meeting of the Council with his tongue in his cheek, to declare that 'Germany has failed in her obligation which lies upon all members of the international community' (note that Germany had by then resigned from the League) 'to respect undertakings which they had contracted'. What was the 'undertaking' which Germany had treated with disrespect? Had she made war on a fellow-Member? Had she

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

defied a ruling and was it her intention to annex the territory of that Member? No, she had resigned her membership nearly two and a half years previously and her breach of an obligation was the breach of the Treaties of Versailles and Locarno, which condemned her to the demilitarization of part of her own territory without any corresponding demilitarization on the other side of the frontier.

When a sanctionist falls back upon the stale old electioneering device of pointing out what bad company anti-sanctionists keep, I know he has reached the limit of convincing argument. It is well enough from a platform in Hyde Park to invite an audience to admire them in the company of Colonel Blimp, but it won't do for those who can read. My arguments would disgust and horrify that company.

There were only two fundamental mistakes in the Covenant of the League; all other faults and misdeeds and omissions were those of Members of the League. One mistake in the Covenant can only be lived down with time. It will take years to heal the psychical effects of having wilfully made the League a partial League. That was one of the follies of the war-mind. But patience and goodwill and candour could banish the effects. The other mistake can be rectified as soon as the Members wish it so. It consisted in giving coercive powers of war-strength to

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

a group of sovereign states at the stage of civilization reached in 1914; in conferring upon them the duty of combining their physical forces, while their moral forces were still so divergent and, one must add, so elementary.

Having given so much space to what is, not much will be given to the consideration of the third proposal for what might be — if things were very different from what they are: the proposal for a *United States of Europe*. There is much to be said in theory for such a system, which is much more congruous than one which attempts to weld sovereign states, while leaving them the control of their armed forces. If all the great European states were inside the Federation; if each of them possessed no more armed force than it required for domestic policing; if the Federation were not empowered or armed to make war on any other Federation, it is conceivable that it might be a beneficent form of organization, possessing some carefully guarded juridical and legislative powers. Much could be learnt from the successes and failures of the United States of America.<sup>1</sup>

The analogy should not, however, be driven too far. Europe began tribal and was then under a suc-

<sup>1</sup> A most valuable book on the evolution of that nation is *The Oxford History of the United States* (1783-1917), by S. E. Morison, M.A. (Oxford University Press), especially Chapters VI and LVI. American history has proved the wisdom of the Pilgrim Father's dictum: 'Let the governments be as the materials be' (Rev. John Cotton, 1636).

## OFFENCE AND DEFENCE

cession of partial empires, some with a theological basis. These were followed by the divisions into nations, strongly differentiated, speaking diverse languages and acquiring local habits and indurated thoughts, ancient histories and long vendettas. The United States arose out of a much less differentiated mass, with a very short history and with a common language and tradition. Moreover the nation emerged from a war of liberation and was welded by another even more terrible war, in which secession and a fundamental principle of humanity (abolition of slavery) were the issues at stake. Is it possible for a United States of Europe to arise without obstinate armed conflict? America had no such horror to face as Europe would have with the development of scientific war, which would most probably resolve the conflict in anarchy, plague, pestilence and famine.

Is it possible to introduce such a system piecemeal, by gradual development of co-operation and consent? The difficulties of delimiting, alone, would be formidable. Coudenhove-Kalergi considered Russia should form part of an Asiatic Federation. She might choose to remain as now, a Union of Socialist Soviet Republics but separate from the United States of Europe; that seems unlikely, considering Russia's persistent desire to have a finger in every European pie. The British Isles, also, were

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

told to form a Federation with the Empire and leave Europe alone, which again, sounds unlikely. Yet there is no doubt that the existence of British Dominions and colonies as well as French, Italian, Dutch, Belgian and Portuguese colonies greatly complicates the problem. I propose not to solve it.

## CHAPTER II

### STOPPING WAR

How would you stop war? — Too late to stop war after pursuing war-policy for years — No lightning cure — The 'women and children' pretext — The 'Home Front' — If war cannot be stopped at the last moment it might be limited and shortened — Collective Neutrality should be organized — Continuous mediation offered — Various types of embargo and boycott — Neutrals as far as possible removed from war zone — The League, being neutral, should undertake dissemination of war news and proposals for mediation, with replies — Mischief-making of diplomatic correspondents — Passive resistance and its possible consequences

HAVING rejected — as peacemaking remedies for war — both the old-style alliances and the new-style alliances disguised as regional pacts 'within the framework of the League'; having even rejected the path of 'Collective Security', I find myself in a hubbub of indignant voices crying, 'Then you would allow Italy to trample on Ethiopia?' 'Then you would refuse to come to the assistance of a victim of aggression?' 'Then you prefer lawless force to the lawful protection of the Covenant?' Or merely a somewhat scornful 'How, then, would *you* stop war?' This last question strikes me as not a little comic on the lips of any contemporary; for whatever any has



## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

done or tried to do, no one has yet stopped a major war by the action or threat of sanctions; nor seems like to do so. I have endeavoured to show how it came about that Ethiopia was not saved from Italy in spite of solemn promises and all the paraphernalia of regional pacts and sanctions clauses. I recognize that things are what they are and their consequences will be what they will be. Looking at the terms of the Covenant, the character of the Members and their past history, I never did believe that they were prepared to risk all to 'defend the Covenant'. And I think that those who, mistakenly but in all good faith, did so believe rendered no service to the cause of peace, which needs, above all else, not faith in the fulfilment of our Wish, but a stern recognition of the effects of certain causes. The way to stop war is to stop the causes of war; and they are many; and the way is hard.

It is worse than useless to pursue, for years, policies which tend inexorably to war and then, on the very brink, to suppose you can 'stop the war'. The ardent sanctionist, who cries out that if you don't accept his Lightning Cure you must offer him another, is like the drunkard who, being told by a doctor that his quack remedy for drunkenness will kill him, replies, 'Then find me another that will promise as much'. Would not a wise doctor reply, 'The remedy is to stop drinking'? If you honestly

## STOPPING WAR

don't want war you must stop making wars. You must stop wanting, and doing the things which make wars.

Peace is not an unearned bonus on the selfish or childish conduct of international relations; it is a grace descending upon their rational treatment. Nothing more boring, because more void of meaning, than declamation about devotion to peace. It was this declamation which made so much of the oratory at Geneva sound mere fustian. How was it possible to applaud an orator crying, 'Away with guns! Away with cannon!' while his own state was in armed occupation of a fellow-member's territory and intended to remain there for four more years? The thunders of applause which greeted that oration of Briand's in 1926 struck on my heart like a blow, for they showed that even that audience had not begun to understand the way of peace. A neighbour of mine cried delightedly, 'He's as good as Coquelin!' But here, here, in this atmosphere of the footlights, the issues of peace and war were being decided.

There is a specious appeal to the emotions in urging that we should 'come to the assistance' of a victim of aggression. What precisely is the 'assistance' rendered by war or war sanctions? Mexicans, Germans, Russians, Italians, Frenchmen, Portuguese and others have been 'coming to the assistance'

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

of belligerents in the Spanish civil war. Have they helped the cause of peace?

Then there is the simple-minded man (so strongly represented on the Tribunals dealing with conscientious objectors in the war) who tried to pose the objector with the question, 'If your mother' (sister, wife — any female person, behind whose petticoats men can fight, will serve) 'were attacked by a brute, would you not come to her assistance?' and, if the answer were in the affirmative, leant back in his chair with a happy 'Well, you see you would. That is just what your country is asking you to do now.' As if one man knocking down or even killing one criminal were comparable with thousands, nay millions, among whom would be the flower of the nations, killing each other for an avoidable cause! As if the consequences to the whole world were comparable! As if, indeed — even if we accept that miserable pretext of the mothers, wives, or what-nots — 'coming to their assistance' with vesicants and high explosives would not destroy far more of them than would be destroyed if the war, instead of being extended by your assistance were restricted by your neutrality!

As to 'preferring' lawless force, it is an absurd question to put to an out-and-out pacifist. Would you prefer to be killed by a gang of red shirts or by a gang of black shirts? I certainly think that there

## STOPPING WAR

is more danger to peace in the faulty sanctions clauses of the Covenant and in the still more faulty use of them by Members than there would be if they were swept away; and I have given my reasons.

This does not mean that we need not try to do anything at all to mitigate, or to bring about the conclusion of a war that has resulted from past misdeeds. Far from it. The fatalist, generally a lazy person who chooses to excuse lack of thought, or courage, or compassion, by a shrug of the shoulders and the flippant assertion, 'We always have had wars and always shall; war is natural to man', will find that unless man, with his unnatural armaments ceases to be natural man and to give way to his natural instincts, the forces of nature, which accept no excuses, will eliminate him; not painlessly; and with him the 'women and children' he professes to be 'protecting'. Indeed, it will be 'women and children first', if war should come to a densely crowded island like England. If man is still so near a state of nature that he must still fight, let him use his natural weapons and fight with his fists!

I marvel at the torpor of the mass of women in this matter. A good many can be persuaded by a few active persons to fill in a ballot paper or to pass a resolution 'viewing with dismay' the armaments race. But of intelligent interest in policy there is deplorably little. Yet war is the result of behaviour

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

and policy; armaments are the means by which this policy is carried out; armaments will not be reduced unless policy becomes peace policy. It is policy that we have to tackle in the first place, not the effects of policy. The effects are being felt in this country as elsewhere. There is not only the fantastic sum of 1500 millions to be proposed for rearmament here, but there will be all the cost of replacement, of storage and maintenance of this monstrous equipment. There will have to be more and more land taken up for manœuvring and testing these unnatural weapons in whose use natural man must be drilled. Then, we are to have great developments on 'the home-front', which is going to be *the* front in 'the next war'. Vast preparations for the storage of food and for the conversion of land from the most profitable peace-time use to uses adapted for the postponement of an artificial famine. We hoot at Germany's sacrifice of 'butter for guns', but we shall have to do precisely the same and more, living on a crowded island as we do. And all because, when we had the chance, we did not stand firmly for scaling down our armaments proportionately to Germany as she was in 1932. And we would not do that, in spite of the proposals made by Germany, Italy and Russia, because our policy required us to maintain a greatly predominant position.

Sir William Beveridge concludes a series of three

## STOPPING WAR

most illuminating articles on 'The Home Front' in *The Times* (February 24th, 1937) by the following passage:

'From now on, till the fear of war is banished finally from earth, all the economic activities of the country — governmental and private — should be reviewed from the standpoint of better preparedness for war. Location of stores and factories of every kind, development of ports, regulation of transport, planning of towns and designing of houses, agricultural policy, organization of police and fire-brigades, of hospitals and water supply; none of these things can be left any longer to be guided by the old criterion of greater wealth or more comfort in peace. Defence is more than opulence; in a new war defence means largely defence on the home front.'

It is true. 'Oh! now for ever, Farewell the tranquil mind; farewell content!' To this pass has victory, followed by 'collective security', as men have interpreted it, brought us. This is how they are carrying out that solemn pledge to 'promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security'. Governments excuse themselves. Each country chooses its own scapegoat and itself wears the white flower of a blameless life. Apologists for the League say that the League was not to blame.

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

Who then? No one. War just 'breaks out'. Like a volcano.

Our rulers are alarmed at the birth-rate. There will be too many old people by and by in comparison with the young. I think we old people are more meet for starving and bombing than the babes. We must, they say, make maternity 'safer and less painful', so that women may be induced to have more children — for the 'home front'! Women, young women have their remedy for this monstrous imposition. Will they use it?

Have women yet in any numbers imaginatively reconstructed, as Cicely Hamilton did sixteen years ago in her remarkable book *Lest ye Die*, what 'the next war' for which we are preparing would be like? They have now had a small sample in the fate of Spain. 'Keeping the population on the run' will be the best strategy. Doubtless the aviators will bomb munition factories and stores as well as troops where they can find them. But they will also aim at starting hundreds of fires at once, blowing up gas and electricity and sewage works; water reservoirs and locks; granaries and stores of all sorts of food. There will be no clean water, no shelter, no light, no heat, no sanitation and no food. The roads will be blocked with lorries and the fleeing populace will be bombed from the air as it was when it streamed on the road between Malaga and Almeria.

## STOPPING WAR

This is what the 'knights of the air' will be doing here and our only satisfaction will be that our knights will be doing the same over there — wherever 'there' may be. Queer wicked world, isn't it? that emerges from the labours of peace-professing politicians, laboratory-minded, mild-mannered scientists, 'nice-boy' aviators, all driving the herd-like multitude! And even more silly than wicked.

One of the great dangers now is that the better sort of people who have really worked for peace may grow weary. Tired out with what may seem fruitless effort, they may throw up the work and give place to those anarchic minds which drift about in great numbers always ready to follow someone who promises to *do* something — anything. The sort of man whom Mr. Wells classed among the 'Gawd-sakers'. The sort which at once leaps to some sort of violence, to some act which will compel others to his will; who justifies his own violence by the excited question 'Are you going to allow . . . ?' something which no violence can ever prevent or assuage.

It is upon the making of peace that we should concentrate, for that is a problem requiring immense thought and sacrifice and resolution, and our effort towards that should be as little distracted as possible. But, if there should be war anywhere, there are certain acts and thoughts, of individuals as well as governments, which might promote the early end



## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

of the war, while also building up a peace system for the future.

The first necessity, should there be an outbreak of war anywhere, would be to organize Collective Neutrality. Observing the horrible rehearsal of a general *mêlée* on Spanish soil that we have lately seen, it is obvious that the Spanish people, women and children, would have suffered less if all the meddlesome volunteers and pseudo-volunteers had kept out. It has been called a civil war. It began as a Spanish militarist rebellion and it has been turned into manoeuvres for half a dozen nationalities which have found it convenient to experiment in the relative merits of their bombing planes and guns, on territory where the civilian casualties would be only one-sided.

Impatient people, witnessing the persistent intrusions of foreign forces and arms into Spain, in contravention of plain undertakings to abstain, did not recognize that the London Committee for Non-Intervention constituted an experiment of immense importance. Piecemeal, without machinery, without perorations, without even the presence of well-known personages, this obscure Committee felt its way to a method of organizing the new principle of Collective Neutrality. There have been obvious breaches on the part of most Powers, and Mexico, not being represented on the Committee, may hold

## STOPPING WAR

itself absolved from obligation; but the effort went on for months and, if it did not stop intervention, reduced it. We who were patient while, for sixteen years, the League of Nations, with all its paraphernalia, failed to carry out its principle of Collective Security — a principle politically unsound — should have some patience with these efforts to carry out a principle which is far more hopeful. The hypocrisy behind many of the undertakings, the accusations and counter accusations can hardly fail to revolt sincere people. But hypocrisy among diplomats did not begin in 1936. Moreover, a failure on the part of the League to secure complete neutrality would not have the devastating effect of a failure in the imposition of Sanctions, once begun.

The tediousness of the effort and its lack of picturesqueness make appeals to passion in support of it difficult, unless there is in some people a passion for peace stronger than the common passion for war; a peace passion which might take fire from one in whom it burned with the white light of intelligence. Such people exist. If the effort could be kept up long enough, it would allow the natural war-weariness of the meddlesome Powers to assert itself and make them gradually more willing to negotiate, especially if they were getting nothing out of their intervention. The policy of Collective Neutrality

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

would have the further advantage of rallying the hearty support of the United States and all sections of pacifists would welcome it.

If Collective Neutrality could be secured, it would be one of the chief duties of the League to offer continuous mediation and at the same time to do all in its power to broadcast the facts, so far as they were ascertainable; not merely the facts concerning the progress of the war but the facts relating to its alleged causes and objects and also to the mediation proposals. It would be of incalculable benefit if there were some centre from which something resembling truth could radiate. But of course, if the League itself were involved in the war, that would be good-bye to truth. No party to a war can afford to tell the truth. The lie is the most useful weapon. Every type of peaceful settlement should be offered, not once for all, but at frequent intervals: conciliatory, arbitral, judicial. The neutral world should stand solid behind the League in approving this.

At the same time, the crucial question would have to be faced immediately as to what degree of diplomatic and economic co-operation there should be between the neutrals and the belligerents. Article 16 of the Covenant enjoins the immediate (1) severance of all trade or financial relations between the aggressor and Members of the League; (2) prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals; (3) pre-

## STOPPING WAR

vention of all financial, commercial, or personal intercourse between the nationals of the aggressor and those of any other state 'whether a Member of the League or not'. The mere suggestion that an attempt should be made to carry out the third injunction (by preventing oil from a non-Member, America, reaching Italy) was what precipitated the crash of sanctions against Italy in the Ethiopian war.

For any state to say 'I will not trade with you while you are fighting' is a very different thing from saying 'I will join in an organized boycott by the whole world' or, alternatively, 'a boycott of League Members only, directed against trade with you'. There is a further distinction (though not a sharp one) between selling munitions and weapons of war and raw materials for the manufacture of these on the one hand and selling (and buying) other commodities, especially necessities of life. Thirdly, there is the problem whether the absolute embargo should be placed on export of arms to all the belligerents or only to those declared aggressors.

These are all complex and in some cases technical matters beyond the scope of this little book. In my opinion the tests should be that, whatever measures are taken, they should:

1. Contribute to a speedy end of war; 2. Prevent the extension of the conflict to other countries;

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

3. Avoid all suspicion of penalty or punishment;
4. Make no attempt to coerce other states to join the boycott;
5. To the utmost limit, diminish the suffering. I would not have an organized boycott on anything but munitions and materials for munitions, and even this should not be internationally enforced, but agreed upon and imposed by municipal order.

I am well aware that, on these principles, Powers less squeamish than others might 'make a fortune out of the war', and even permanently perhaps (so far as anything of the sort is ever permanent) divert trade from the more scrupulous Powers to themselves. In the short run and the material view, honesty is not always the best policy; but virtue is always its own reward. I am also aware that, if all munitions were refused to belligerents, this would press hardly on a Power which possessed little in the way of munitions or of means to make them; and further, it is probable that that Power would be the less provocative of the belligerents. None the less, as, in order to make the distinction, it would be necessary to declare the aggressor, the lesser of two evils would be to refuse to sell or give any munitions to any belligerent. I cannot see how, by any system, equality of sacrifice can be ensured for neutrals; but much might be done by mutual help among neutrals. I cannot see, either, how equality in munitions can

## STOPPING WAR

be secured as between belligerents; but war is not a race in which neutrals are required to do the handicapping. War is a crime.

On the whole, to avoid 'regrettable incidents', as many neutrals as possible should be removed from the belligerent countries, except such as might contribute to the alleviation of suffering or those who were in a position to help in continuous mediation. Events in China during the years following 1924 showed what a complication could be the presence of large numbers of foreigners in a country ravaged by civil war; all these foreigners outrageously expecting to travel and trade as they would in a land at peace and making all sorts of claims and accusations because they were incommoded. It would be well, also, if all neutrals in the belligerent countries left the dissemination of Truth to the League of Nations, which ought to be the only body entitled to employ a staff of war-correspondents. I am not so foolish as to suppose that they, being mortal, could see with any but mortal eyes. Nevertheless, some of the beams would have been removed from their eyes.

I scarcely dare trust myself to say anything about contemporary history as manufactured by some correspondents. There was one in particular at Shanghai during those years of the Kuomintang revolution who must have misled thousands of

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

English readers as to its real meaning and progress. We have been assured successively that the Bolshevik, the Fascist, the Nazi revolutions could not possibly endure another year, and that, not only in our gutter-press, but in first-class newspapers which treated news, facts, tendentiously instead of objectively.

It is not only in time of war or revolution that we are served with that sort of reporting. There is a mysterious person called 'Our diplomatic correspondent', a sort of demi-semi-official political gossip-monger, who gets his copy where he can: from ministers who want to fly a kite anonymously (some of those in the highest positions here have used this method constantly); from loquacious politicians in parliamentary lobbies and cosy corners; from Foreign Office officials; from delegates or secretaries of delegations at the *Palais des Nations* at Geneva, down to the talk of fellow-journalists (and others) in *Bier Hallen* and bars in Geneva, Prague, or Paris, or all the thousand places where gossip (and sometimes the contents of waste-paper baskets) is exchanged or sold.

From them we hear that 'Opinion is hardening' against some proposal; or 'It is thought here' (wherever he happens to be ostensibly writing from — for some years after the war nearly all the news dated from Russia was written in Riga):

## STOPPING WAR

‘that nothing will come of the pact made last year’; or ‘There is a *rapprochement* between Ruritania and Lunaria, so long at odds; Lunaria feels she must have her hands free, should an opportunity arise for a *coup*, long prepared, against Animalcula. Animalcula is of little value in itself but the bulk of the population is almost pure Lunatic, and it is, of course, on the high road to Xanadu. Its possession would set Lunaria astride one of the high roads of the Empire, a situation which would be viewed with the gravest apprehension in Bedlam Street.’

If we keep track over a considerable period of what is written by ‘Our diplomatic correspondent’ in any particular paper, we shall find that what is thought ‘here’ turns out to be miraculously in agreement with what is thought by the editor of the paper in which these thoughts have been set out in print. Should the editor be changed, ‘what is thought’ abroad sometimes most amusingly changes with him. Powerful men, these editors!

There appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* of May 26th, 1937, an article by their diplomatic correspondent, dated from London, which was headed ‘German cordiality towards Great Britain. New “Peace Offensive” expected’. It sneered at the cordiality of the German press during the Coronation,



## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

and remarked, 'It is believed here' (by whom or by what?) 'that German expressions of respect and friendliness towards Great Britain will increase. This phenomenon (which is by no means new) is welcomed, all the more so as it is believed that those who have persistently misapprehended it in the past are now in a small minority.' That is to say, it is permissible to welcome German friendliness, provided we embitter our welcome with suspicion.

After M. Blum had come into power in June 1936 he told us that Europe had the previous March been within an ace of war as a consequence of German troops entering the Rhineland in *Paradeschritt*. Certainly if some of the correspondents could have brought about this war, they would. This would have been a 'preventive war' — exquisite phrase!

What looks like the simplest and most drastic way of stopping a war as soon as it has begun, or even before that in conscripted countries, is the way of passive resistance. This has the immense advantage that it can be practised by individuals, though it could be made very much more formidable by organization. It seems only right that those who are convinced that it would be wrong to offer any armed resistance to an invader and still more wrong to take part in retaliatory invasion, should inform their government beforehand. This, if on an extensive scale, could not fail to affect the government's policy.

## STOPPING WAR

Taking our own country, it seems to me unlikely that a declaration of absolute pacifism by a British government — a difficult assumption — would result in the immediate invasion of Britain that some patriots foretell with shudders. A much more probable result would be a military, naval and air revolt against the absolutely pacifist government and the establishment of a military dictatorship in Britain. This could have been rendered impossible only if the armed forces had been solid behind the absolutist government; an assumption I find beyond my imagination. It is true that the Russian revolution was successful precisely because the bulk of the army and navy turned against the government and would not continue the war, and there have been many other instances of similar mutinies; but they have taken place after an unsuccessful war, not as preliminaries to a war just begun or threatening.

The result of such a clash of policy between citizens and forces would depend on the determination of the absolutists and the degree of brutality which the dictatorship was prepared to use against them. In such a struggle women could play a part on either side whose importance can hardly be exaggerated, both as substitutes for men and as encouragers and lovers of men. Whether they have the courage and ingenuity to strike out a policy of their own, as women, remains to be seen.

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

As to what the threatening foe would do in such a conjuncture, we have to remember that even the maddest militarist state does not go to war for nothing at all. Something had been done or not done by the absolute pacifist government or its immediate predecessor which tempted the foe to make or threaten war and presumably the pacifist government would be compelled to alter the policy and yield the point in question — whatever it was. I find it difficult to believe that, as soon as all resistance as well as all provocation ceased, the foe would politely remark ‘Sorry!’ and withdraw, with or without his booty. If we are absolutists, we ought to be quite sure that we face all that non-resistance might mean. At the same time, we ought also to face all that armed resistance, in these days, does mean. Most of the absolutists I have heard speak have underrated the extent and intensity of the struggle at home and have been unduly optimistic about the pacifist response that might be expected from other countries. That response might come, especially from dissatisfied countries; but it would take time, and terrible things would happen in the interval.

## CHAPTER III

# MAKING PEACE

Sterilizing effect of war talk — Peace is a way of life founded on a strong ethical faith — This faith works — Folly of making Germany a recidivist nation — The double standard — Peace policy is not reconcilable with war policy — Free trade and transit — The problem of migration — Frontiers and minorities — The problem of Jewry — Germany's claim to colonies — Prestige — If the League devoted itself to the possible it might win confidence — It has done some good work but that has been hampered by parsimony and fears of the infraction of Sovereignty — A New Deal wanted — Confidence would grow with good deeds — Internationalization of Civil Aviation and agreement to abolish Air Forces — The crusading spirit a dangerous retrogression, full of contradictions — Men do not, as is said, yet universally desire peace without prefix or suffix.

ALTHOUGH it may be necessary to search our hearts, both individually and in conference, as to what we are and what we are not prepared to do to stop a war, once begun, the task of making peace is infinitely more varied and interesting. Concentration on the first has a sterilizing effect. All the negatives get together to organize themselves for opposition to a vague something — War! Where? Against whom? What for? Nobody knows. But as no one has more than a limited amount of energy and ingenuity

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

at his disposal, this is apt to be diverted from the constructive work of making peace and to be frittered away in comparing texts, reckoning up forces, extracting pledges, arguing definitions. Moreover, the perpetual concentration on the thought of war is depressing, exasperating, panic-making. We have seen this in the League, but it is true also of the peace movement outside the League.

The newspapers are great sinners in this respect. One would suppose, from reading the pages devoted to foreign affairs, that these consisted almost entirely of plots and counterplots. Yet everyone who has travelled knows what wells of refreshment are to be found in the strangeness, the foreignness of foreign countries. Those journalists who don't know how to get this across to their readers don't know their business. I once heard George Russell (A. E.) exclaim, 'Give me the *Grocers' Gazette*, give me the *Drapers' Review*, and I'll make them thrilling!' As indeed he did make his *Irish Homestead*; far more thrilling than the gunmen's thrillers on either side. The evil results of this concentration on negatives are to be seen among some earnest pacifists but nowhere have they been so grotesquely exhibited as at Geneva, where money and time were always grudged for building up co-operation; where Nansen himself had to protest — after flamboyant praises disguising the refusal of cash — that he did not wish

## MAKING PEACE

himself and his work to be 'buried under a heap of flowers'.

Peace is a way of life. A rational conduct of international relations would result in peace. It requires and in turn encourages a state of mind. That state of mind is based on a strong ethical faith. This is not the place to argue whether such a faith must be based on a theology or even on a religion. Whatever else may be believed, this can be: this faith works. I propound it for no other than the pragmatical reason that it works. Man is a herd animal. Now that the herd has become world-wide, he must learn to live with his fellow man, or he will die out. In the practised and effortless functioning of this faith lies happiness beyond all other earthly happiness. To the extent that man has learnt to practise this faith he is happy. Virtue is its own reward; it often has no other, but that is sure — none can deprive him of it. All so-called self-interest, whether applied to individuals or to nations, is a rotten foundation unless it combines with the self-interest of others. Humanity is an organism, and hypertrophied parts are diseased parts. The selfish realist policy is not realist at all; it does not work.

The common mass of people feel this urge of a common humanity far more strongly than their rulers. But even these, be they never so cynical in their hearts, admit the common ethical basis; for

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

in their most impassioned rhetoric they always use ethical arguments. The rulers may be taking a mean advantage, and the mass may be confused and sentimental and easily stampeded, but every nation has its ethics and there are certain spiritual graces which common people set high. The chief of these are truth, courage and kindness. Physical courage is the commonest of all; moral courage the rarest. Why cannot we get these into politics? If it is asked why any nation should practise these virtues unless it is compelled by Authority, the answer is the pragmatical one that, with them, common life works; without them it breaks down, to the accompaniment of great unhappiness. Sheer stupidity prevents us from seeing that this is so. We are unhappy and we don't know why. We cry out for peace but we don't make peace.

It is rare indeed to find a government meeting its people with the explanation, 'We made this concession, because we thought it right'. Yet it is possible to conceive that the mass of people might be immensely proud of a ruler who, with transparent honesty, told them so. As things are, goodness is supposed to be a kind of weakness. It is one of the oddest things in politics that apologists for the Carthaginian peace frequently excuse it by asking, 'What would the Germans have done if they had been victorious?' The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk

## MAKING PEACE

showed us a small sample of what they would have done. Did we approve? None was more censorious than the advocate of the Carthaginian peace. This was right and the other was wrong and was denounced unilaterally at the earliest possible moment; and quite rightly; there is nothing sacrosanct about an unjust treaty imposed by force. But we should not denounce only the unjust treaties imposed by others and defend those we made in a period of aberration.

Now one hears, 'When we have given Hitler this, that and the other, will he stop demanding more? If not, why give him anything?' Apart from the fact that we have 'given' nothing freely and as a cheerful giver, but have had concessions filched from us, and that none of these concessions has deprived anyone of territory, wealth, or freedom, but all of them put together have only somewhat reduced the grossest inequalities of an unjust treaty in the matter of armaments, the question misses the chief point, which is that persistent bullying does not make people reasonable; it cows them, as Germany was cowed, and drives them to secret ways; thence to megalomania (for their rehabilitation in their own eyes) and brutality (in order to secure unity) and with unity, strength to resist. When Germany at last won out of prison, she was not at once filled with love of her tormentors and sweet reasonableness.



## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

Was it likely? But what would wise men do, now that she is stronger (though not nearly as strong as they)? How are we to live with Germany? That is a much more difficult problem than it would have been in 1918. Do we want to make of Germany a recidivist nation? If men are to live peacefully with their fellow men they must learn not to humiliate them, not, in an excellent phrase of Laurence Housman's, to shut up their prisoners 'in a negation of society, to learn how they could do without it'. We may make a recidivist nation while we are pluming ourselves on our righteousness. It is the severest prisons which turn out most recidivists.

I seem to hear an objector say, 'You suggest that one-sided non-resistance may be possible and yet you defend Germany for rearming as soon as she found it practicable to do so. Let us be clear about this: do you approve or disapprove of rearmament?' I regret immensely that Germany has rearmed and I think it possible that one-sided non-resistance might under certain conditions work; but those conditions do not resemble Germany's conditions. Non-resistance or non-violent resistance could be offered only from the profoundest conviction. One-sided disarmament, forcibly imposed and accompanied by years of humiliation, isolation and injustice, is not in the least likely to produce the state of mind which will make men constant in non-

## MAKING PEACE

resistance or in non-violent resistance. The passive resistance attempted in the Ruhr in 1923 broke down because there was neither complete confidence between the classes, nor a deep ethical purpose in all. It was worked in a spirit of war.

Punishment, brutality even, is probably not so exasperating as the double standard which we apply to ourselves and others. For instance, 'Trade follows the flag'. But only when the flag is the Union Jack. Not the German flag. 'What does Germany want with colonies? She can buy all she needs of us.' That is to say, when we allow her. 'And Germany might recruit coloured men for war in Europe.' She might; but she never did, though Spain and Britain and France did, and Italy is doing so. 'We couldn't allow Germany to own air-stations or strategic points.' As Bernard Shaw says, 'I should feel so much safer if all the other fellows were tied up'. 'Besides, look at Hitler's racial theories! How could we hand over native tribes — Bantus, Hottentots — to one who holds the German race superior, while we . . .' What do we do?

And then there are the people who resent the singing of *Deutschland über Alles* (of which the tune is frequently sung in English choirs and places where they sing). And the ignoramuses do not even know that the burden of that song is the unity, the sovereignty of Germany over all her component

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

parts (Bavaria, Swabia, Saxony and all the little princedoms), the divisions of which stopped her development as a nation. It has no reference to conquests like ours of the French in India and Canada, or of Spain in the West Indies, or of the Boers. British theory and practice coincide when we sing —

Wider still and wider shall thy bounds be set!  
God who made thee mighty, make thee mightier  
yet!

If this warms the cockles of your heart, why grudge the German his pride in a unified land? Or the American his?

Each country has one language for its own deeds and another for similar deeds when perpetrated by others. We regard with horror the bombardment of helpless Ethiopians from the air, but we mowed down equally helpless Dervishes with our machine-guns at Omdurman, and even lately we found the 'fleeing Waziris an excellent target' for aerial bombardment. It seems we 'warn the villagers' to evacuate their miserable homes and take refuge in caves, and we consider that such warnings should absolve us from accusations of atrocity. But there were plenty of warnings that the *Lusitania* was to be sunk; yet we thought that an atrocity. Reprisals are always horrible; have we never used them, in

## MAKING PEACE

Ireland and elsewhere? What fine shade of atrocity is there between reprisals and punitive expeditions? It was very dreadful when Germany bombarded Almeria before consulting the Non-Intervention Committee; but both the Treaty of Locarno and the Franco-Soviet Pact allowed of action first and consultation after; and the League approved. Germans still use the language of the duellist: when they kill, they 'vindicate their honour'. We say, 'We can't take it lying down'. The French maintain that their 'Security' requires them to punish the aggressor immediately.

In 1936 Mr. Eden lamented that 'the world' was rearming. Later Mr. Chamberlain talked of 'the incredible folly of civilization, which is piling up these terrible burdens on the shoulders of the nations'. But 'civilization' includes, among others, Mr. Chamberlain. Britain is not among the weak Powers. She is allied to France, which is allied to Russia, and M. Blum said in 1936 that France was, 'next to Russia', the most highly armed Power in Europe. 'We do believe that our own country will not be able to play its proper part or make its full contribution to peace and prosperity *until it has behind it the strength to command respect and attention.*' Who said that? Herr Hitler? He might have said it, but as a matter of fact it is quoted from Mr. Baldwin's message to the Conservative and Unionist

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

Party in January 1937. If it had been said by Herr Hitler there would have been some comments about 'sabre rattling'. The diplomatic correspondent, be it noted, still uses language appropriate to the seventeenth century.

Peace is a way of life and depends on a state of mind. It is not possible to pursue a peace policy if you have not even made up your mind for peace. The decision is a crucial one. Peace involves the extension of co-operation and therefore of interdependence between nations; war requires the exact reverse. If you may at any moment be going to fight a nation, the less you become dependent on its trade the better. In fact, the less you are dependent on any trade outside your own nation, the better. So, up with the tariff walls, embargoes and quotas! Learn to eat grass!

Free transit is almost as dangerous as free trade. Do not let your nationals fraternize too much with the nationals of the other country. They may find some good in them and grow unwilling to fight them. Let the evil that men do — and there is plenty of it — be ever-present to your minds, to the exclusion of the good. Advise your own people to boycott the international sports and festivities of others and belittle their accomplishments. Do not forget to deride their manners and appearance, their titles, their salutes, their passwords. See that you mis-

## MAKING PEACE

translate their speech, so that it carries an offensive or a ludicrous meaning. Headlines are very useful for this purpose. Many people read no farther. There is infinite scope for a sub-editor in charge of cross-headings. He can pull a speech out of all proportion without altering or even omitting a word. And he may do this quite honestly if the B in his bonnet is big enough. He emphasizes what he thinks important and what he thinks important is the bad, not the good.

The extension of co-operation in free trade and transit is essential to peace-making. If there is one subject more suitable than another for international co-operation it is the subject of the migration of people and it is a sign of the dreadful degeneration of the Members of the League that the work of Dr. Nansen and of Albert Thomas in salvaging refugees should have been prevented from becoming, as it might have become, the nucleus of a scientific treatment of this great humanitarian question. The International Federation of Trade Unions in 1927 published a book entitled *World Migration and Labour*, by John W. Brown, which showed plainly what the League had done and what much more it might do, if only the nations would co-operate, in assuaging the miseries of the stateless and of the unemployed.

The great change in the refugee service of the

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

League was made in 1924, when both Nansen and Thomas strongly held that this, having become largely a matter of employment, was really one for the International Labour Office to deal with. I reviewed John Brown's book in *Foreign Affairs*, and I remember vividly the heart-breaking task of having to admit that Britain and the Empire had been the enemies of any international consideration of this radical problem. At a meeting of the Fifth Committee of the Assembly in 1926 Dr. Breitscheid, a member of the first delegation Germany had yet sent to the League, introduced a proposal that use should be made of the I.L.O. organization 'for the execution of work of a more general character' in the way of helping emigration and immigration societies who applied for help. The core of the opposition was Great Britain, Canada, Australia and South Africa, all in a panic about sovereignty. Greece (ungratefully, for no country owed more to Nansen) joined the opposition and so did Yugoslavia. Albert Thomas spoke warmly, but with his usual caution, in favour; Germany, Austria and Poland pressed for it. Eventually, after much whittling down, a resolution was put, requesting the I.L.O. 'to consider the possibility of submitting a report to the International Economic Conference' (to be held in 1927), 'suggesting, in the light of their experience, by what practical means the co-ordina-

## MAKING PEACE

tion between national systems of placing labour, provided for under the Washington Convention, might be carried out effectively'. This almost excessively timid resolution was supported by Italy, Venezuela, Greece, Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Poland. The Mandarins slew it. Since then the situation has gone from bad to worse and even the Nansen Office is threatened with extinction in 1938.

What a monument to Nansen, the League's most faithful servant! How proud we ought to feel that we did our bit to sweep away the remnants of his work and the germ that it held of far greater work! Have we contributed, I wonder, to a statue of Nansen? That would complete the story. A wreath of immortelles would be symbolical.

Among the perennial sources of European trouble have been the frontiers, and some reformers, when they think of treaty revision, think chiefly of altering frontiers and transferring colonies. It is a matter for the most serious consideration whether a given situation would be on the whole improved by the transference of populations from one sovereignty to another. I recall an unintentionally humorous proclamation of Poincaré's to the Alsatians immediately after the Armistice: '*Aujourd'hui vous êtes libres! Demain vous serez Français!*' There can be little doubt that the Lorrainers wished to go back



## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

to France, but in Alsace there were for a long time many distressing cases of hardship and of penalizing, which should be avoided whenever possible.

Any change of sovereignty must cause suffering to individuals and dislocation of trade and industry. There should be a presumption against change of sovereignty unless it is greatly desired by a large majority of the residents. Many of the minorities which now long for a change do so because they are oppressed, and would cease to do so if they were well treated by the government and the majority. Even after the transference of South Tirol, the cry was not so bitter against that wicked deed until Mussolini came to stamp out nationality and 'trample on the putrid corpse of Liberty'.

If, then, one of the most fertile causes of war is to be eliminated, it must be not by restless efforts to change frontiers (except by agreement), but by a steady long-continued push to make frontiers less important; to make the inhabitants, minorities as well as majorities, satisfied; to educate away the mental disease of irredentism; to make it easy to cross frontiers. But there is here a miserable plodding in a circle: the governments oppress their minorities because they don't trust them, and the minorities plot against their governments because they are oppressed by them. An effort was made, by the minorities treaties, to compel new or lately

enlarged Powers to treat their minorities decently. One cannot say whether any provisions of the kind could have been made to work, but in the long run it is impossible to insist on a law of that sort being kept unless it is applied universally; prestige is at once involved if a Power is put into a category of Powers specially supervised and bound. More and more the Powers at Geneva turned a deaf ear to the complaints of minorities; too little use was made of the sanitary virtue of publicity and sometimes the minorities complicated the issue by plotting with other Powers.

Moreover, it was found very difficult to get at the truth without an extensive system of supervision, which no state would accept. The proposal for a Permanent Minorities Commission of the League, to receive and consider any disputes, was theoretically the best, but in the general collapse of all confidence in the League's impartiality, due to alliances and *ententes* which broke up membership into partisanship, this proposal is farther off from realization than it ever was.

Whether the policy of the Great Power be, like Italy's, forcibly to 'assimilate' its minorities; or, like Yugoslavia's, to murder their representatives; or, like Germany's, to put them into ghettos whence they are not even allowed to escape, it must be admitted that the lust for domination and the

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

corroding power of fear have dreadfully increased the cruelties practised against minorities since the war.

The case of Jewry is peculiar, because this is a race found almost everywhere, with no citizenship of its own, claiming (and in many cases granted) full citizenship with a great diversity of other peoples; yet very widely and for many centuries, discriminated against. Prolific, gifted, far advanced in thought, in art and in coherent purpose; yet always and in many different lands, persecuted. We hear very much about the persecution in Germany at present, partly because it is being carried out with a cold-blooded thoroughness which takes it into a special region of horror; partly because it is ostensibly based on fantastically unscientific historical and racial foundations; partly because it is the worst of all the bad results in Germany of the war and the peace. To many people in this country, the *Judenhetze* in Germany is the one inexcusable wickedness. If the Nazis could be prevailed upon to abandon that, the greatest barrier would be broken down between us and Germany.

Not that there is not a vast amount of cruelty and oppression practised on Jews in many other countries. There are three millions in Poland, whom the Government loudly proclaims it wishes to get rid of. There are *pogroms* still, there and in

## MAKING PEACE

half a dozen other countries. None were worse than those in Tsarist Russia. Even France turned anti-Semitic in the days of Dreyfus. A widely spread hostility to Jews existed in Germany long centuries ago. The Nazi anti-Semitic drive is merely a stupid rationalization of a rooted dislike. Sixty years ago I was familiar with this dislike in German Gentiles who lived in very Jewish towns like Hamburg or Frankfurt. It is one of the most persistent problems of Europe and it does not seem as if the peculiar experiment in Palestine could do anything to solve it, in spite of the idealistic origin of that experiment. None the less, the heart rises when a musician like the Gentile, Adolf Busch, refuses to play in Germany while his Jewish fellow-artists are banned; when a Toscanini declares his intention of conducting a Palestinian orchestra at concerts outside Palestine. It should encourage every civilized Gentile to withstand one of the worst reversions to medievalism that this generation has seen. But medievalism cannot be cured by crude force.

It is easier to make treaties than to keep them. It is sometimes easier to break them than to revise them. But the filching from Germany of all her colonies and the device of distributing many of them among our self-governing Dominions was bound to introduce one of the greatest of the difficulties we made for ourselves at Versailles. There was no

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

sound moral justification for looting all the German colonies, even if we did subsequently call them Mandated Territories. Germany's claim now is in truth based far more on prestige than on any economic advantage to be derived from the possession of colonies. Belgium, with her Leopoldian record in the Congo, came away from Versailles with increased property in Africa. Australia and New Zealand and South Africa were promoted to be Empires. France, which has to populate Tunisia with Italians, received Mandates. Even that humane colonizer, Japan, got her bit. The swollen British Empire was further swollen by one of Germany's most successful colonies, Tanganyika. Germany alone was declared, as she maintains, 'unfit' to be a colonizing Power. Truly it does not lie in the mouth of an Englishman, at any rate, to say that this is of no consequence to Germany.

Whether this bother of prestige can be overcome it is hard to say. It is difficult to believe that it would be assuaged by an offer of a swamp in the Congo basin or some part of the Sahara desert (unless indeed that desert were made to blossom like the rose by the ingenious device of decanting part of the Mediterranean into it, via the Libyan desert). But undoubtedly some good would be done by a universal agreement that all colonies as well as mandated areas should allow free access to raw

## MAKING P E A C E

materials, free immigration under international control, equal opportunities for acquisition of land and industrial development and universal application of the demilitarization law now enforced in mandated areas. We have a long way to go and the way should not be obstructed by chatter about Security.

It is a legitimate question whether any attention should be paid to prestige; but it is not legitimate to question the right of some Powers only and not of others. For, alas, prestige has little to do with moral qualities. The prestige of a country is not held, diplomatically, to be high if it only tells the truth, and keeps its promises and treats the weak humanely. Prestige, as Mr. Baldwin has said, depends upon whether a country has 'behind it the *strength to command* respect and attention'; in other words high explosives, vesicants and incendiary bombs, with enough young men willing to drop them on cities and civilian populations. Not a very winsome attribute, this prestige, nor, one would have supposed, very easy to reconcile with the professions of Christian Churches. I suggest that, this being so, the possession of prestige should disqualify a Power from being considered civilized, exactly in proportion to the amount of prestige possessed. She 'commands respect' by blackmail and no one holds blackmail respectable.

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

The League is very badly discredited and this is so not because its Members failed to produce the force necessary to 'command respect' and compel a decision in favour of its judgment, but because it undertook the impossible, threatened the impossible and then — ran away from it. If the League reformed itself, undertook only the possible and honestly worked to accomplish a little of that every year, it would gradually acquire, what is of infinitely greater importance than prestige — fickle, immoral prestige — it would acquire the Confidence of the whole world.

Even handicapped as it has been by all this lumber of a bygone age, the League's constructive work has been considerable, and makes one positively ache to think what men might have accomplished in the time, if they could only have decided to grow up and leave playing with toys of domination and with obsessions of fear to children who have not yet had time to pass through the stage of infantilism.

Besides the work of the I.L.O. in research and documentation, in securing discussion of many important Labour problems and the acceptance of some (too few) useful conventions, the League itself has, through the Permanent Court of International Justice, given many valuable interpretations and decisions, and advisory opinions. It has also, within

## MAKING PEACE

the very narrow limits allotted to it, done good work in Health, Social and Humanitarian questions where, undoubtedly, the setting up of better standards in some countries for the consideration of other less advanced countries has made for improvement in some directions. Where little has been done, it has been due to niggardliness in voting money for this class of work, or to the fears and political prejudices of the rulers of sovereign states. In some of this work the United States has been helpful. It is difficult to calculate the loss incurred by the absence of Germany, whose social work has been a model for Europe.

If all our rulers were in the state of mind of Lord Cecil, all hope of winning Germany back to the League would have to be abandoned. In a debate in the House of Lords on March 2nd, 1937, he actually said:

‘When the German Government had shown a genuine desire to co-operate with other nations, when they returned to the League and the International Labour Office, when they were prepared genuinely to enter into serious negotiations for the reduction of armaments, then he would listen with more attention to the pacific speeches occasionally made for consumption in this country and elsewhere.’



## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

When Stresemann's policy *was* one of co-operation; when Germany *was* in the League and in the I.L.O.; while Germany *was* disarmed relatively to us and the other Powers, and only asked us to respond in disarmament, what did we do to encourage her? Lord Cecil's utterance reminds one of Poincaré's worst speeches at Bar-le-Duc. It is distressing to think that the League of Nations Union is led by a man with such a conception of what the League spirit should be.

Nothing is easier, nothing is more wickedly futile than to throw a spanner into the works and make harmonious co-operation impossible. Certainly the League of Nations has made wars more, rather than less, likely. By basing itself on force and then failing to use force against either Japan or Italy, it has tempted both countries to ignore or defy the League, while the incessant talk about 'defending the Covenant' has given us a first class excuse for our colossal rearmament projects. Yet, in spite of all, there are opportunities to be seized if only a great Power had the vision to seize them. The French are said to be realistic. I wish I could think so. They have missed opportunity after opportunity, partly from a habit of suspicion (*'Nous sommes trahis!'* 'Peace Plot!'), partly from a barren sort of logic in which they do not inquire into the validity of their major and minor premises, or whether, once valid,

## MAKING P E A C E

they have changed with time, but stick tenaciously to their conclusion.

Now is the time for a New Deal. Now Germany has taken, in practice, the equality granted in principle, it would be possible to negotiate an agreement for working purposes. A New Peace; not a new Peace Treaty. We must leave Herr Hitler's domestic policy alone, whether we like it or no; just as we leave alone the domestic policy of the U.S.S.R., Italy, Poland, Yugoslavia and the rest. If there are too many rabid lunatics in the world, there are a few wise men. We should take heart at seeing what could be done by Sir Miles Lampson in China and Egypt; by Lord D'Abernon in Berlin; by Dr. Nansen even within the League of Nations.

Confidence in the League has been disastrously gambled away, but it will grow again just as soon as the League earns it. Confidence depends on courage and faith. As soon as you believe you can skate you find you can. All the puny and painful efforts of one day, made in faith, result in the radiant sense of poise next day. You have won confidence. You have won the power to do, every day, bigger and more difficult things. Confidence would grow with good deeds. We should not trouble overmuch about armaments. One day when the good man goes forth to negotiate some good deed with another for the advantage of both, he will find that he has forgotten

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

to take his gun with him from the rack. That omission will become a habit. The direct assault on armaments has been a great mistake. It makes men bristle about prestige and security and pacts and pledges; so they forget the work of making peace. Arguments against the armaments race should concentrate on showing up what the armaments are for.

Nevertheless, I am not without some hope that, by the internationalization of civil aviation and the agreement to abolish all air forces, the first great step might be taken in disarmament. We missed a very favourable opportunity in 1933, but some other may arise. The peoples may become aware of what a very dangerous military aristocracy is being built up by air forces in every country. Few, select, expert and young, the aviators may become the most dangerous tools of reaction, whether admittedly employed by a state or theoretically employed by a combination of states, such as the League.

There is a great deal to be said for pushing half-open doors; for not attacking the very citadel of national prestige, but for developing every little germ of co-operation (such as the Postal Union and the various aeronautical conventions). The Members of the League should be bound together, each to each, by reciprocal good deeds, not by

## MAKING PEACE

unfulfillable promises of armed force, nor by some supposedly common theory of economics or of government, which changes with the seasons and whose chief use is as a banner or a battle-cry under which to fight, not work.

The crusading spirit of which we have seen the results in Spain is a very curious retrogression and, as in the earlier wars for the Holy Sepulchre, is being used by all sorts of corrupt and barbarous forces, which hide themselves behind the pathetic bands of genuine idealists. It is a formidable extension of reasons, or pretexts for war if Powers are going to claim their right not only to defend themselves from attack, but to defend their opinions from attack all over the world. Inevitably, as we have seen, sections of each country then proceed to fight out their opinions in the unfortunate chosen land. Anti-Fascist refugees fight Mussolini's armed forces; bands of Croix de feu volunteers attack the Communists they dare not yet tackle in France; even Englishmen have gone out in small companies, some to join the Government and some to join the rebels, and Catholic Irishmen have fought side by side with Moslems in defence of the Catholicism they cannot fight for in Ulster.

The situation is full of ghastly humours and contradictions. Two authoritarian governments are supporting rebels. Two Communist governments

## THE CREATION OF CONFIDENCE

are supporting a party which is largely anarchist. From the Free State of Ireland go volunteers moved by two impulses, one to be 'agin' the government', the other to 'defend the Faith'. Some of the volunteers are honest idealists, some mere adventurers; some are not in any real sense volunteers, but conscripted. Britain is concerned at anything which menaces her position in Gibraltar, Malta and Morocco. France is worried to death over the rift in her people. Their governments stand for Collective Neutrality. All three totalitarian Powers babble nonsensically about not tolerating 'centres of infection'. Out of all this welter of idealism and corruption, the totalitarian Powers have hoped to filch some supposed advantage each for himself. One can but pray they may all be equally disappointed.

I wish I could believe the common assertion that men universally desire peace, without prefix or suffix, and hate war, and go to war only because it is forced upon them; an assertion made all over Europe except perhaps in Italy. If all men everywhere hated war as much as women do, there would be no wars. Why do women not go to war, except in eccentric twos and threes here and there? Because they really in the mass don't like it. But unhappily some of them still like to see their men fight, and for glory or for cash, they will help to arm their men. Men have always glorified and honoured war and

## MAKING PEACE

they still do; but not so much as they did. There were plenty of Rupert Brookes and Richthofens, whose spirits reached the stars when God had matched them with that hour of doom, August 4th, 1914. 'They went with songs to battle.' It is true, and women loved them for it. They ate the sour grape and their children's teeth are now set on edge. What will the children of that 'lost generation' do? Some of them, many of them, are supporting sanctions.

'It's a long way to go.' Yes, it's a very long way, so we had better set our feet upon it and not look back. We may not wait for peace to come before we start in good earnest to make peace.

Powers are powerful in proportion to their possessions. But they are also vulnerable in proportion to their possessions. The safest states in a shaking world are the poor states. Not perfectly safe, of course, and a small state may find itself on the high road between two powerful and quarrelsome states.

'So the conclusion of all this is that the League of Nations should do nothing but talk!' I am suggesting that the League should talk for a purpose; should talk to organize peaceful co-operation. All agreements and organizations have to be made through the medium of talk. And we have found, by bitter and humiliating experience, that the League's pretensions to 'do more than talk' have led to the world-wide crash of confidence in the League.